The Greater Kurdistan

Revised and Expanded Edition 2026

Hawre Qandil

In Memory of the Children of Kurdistan

Dedication

"Every child deserves to grow up in peace, dignity, freedom, and hope."

This book is lovingly dedicated to the innocent children of Kurdistan whose lives were stolen by war, oppression, persecution, violence, and injustice. Many never had the opportunity to experience the simple joys of childhood, to fulfil their dreams, or to witness the peaceful future they deserved.

Their memory lives on through these pages. They are not merely victims of history but symbols of courage, resilience, and the enduring strength of the human spirit. Their stories remind us that behind every conflict are innocent lives forever changed, families forever broken, and generations left to carry the weight of unimaginable loss.

This book is also dedicated to every Kurdish child who continues to dream of a future free from fear—a future in which they can live with dignity, preserve their language and culture, enjoy equal rights, and contribute peacefully to humanity alongside all other nations.

May the memory of those we have lost inspire justice instead of hatred, understanding instead of division, and peace instead of conflict. Their voices may have been silenced, but their legacy must never be forgotten.

I dedicate this book to them with the hope that one day every child, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion, will inherit a world where freedom, justice, and human dignity prevail over oppression and violence.

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The Greater Kurdistan

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I sincerely thank and deeply appreciate every person, organisation, publisher, library, educational institution, volunteer, translator, and reader who helps share this work faithfully and without alteration.

It is my hope that this book will help bring greater attention to voices and perspectives that I believe have too often remained unheard. May it encourage thoughtful discussion, inspire further study, and contribute to a deeper understanding of the Kurdish people, their history, and their aspirations.

May this message travel beyond borders, beyond languages, beyond cultures, and beyond generations. May it reach every corner of our shared world and, as humanity continues its journey of discovery, wherever future generations may one day carry human knowledge. My hope is that this voice will continue to be heard, considered, discussed, and better understood by people of every nation, by future generations, and by all who seek justice, truth, peace, and human dignity.

Knowledge grows when it is shared. May this book continue to inspire dialogue, reflection, and understanding for generations to come.

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Guide to This Book

Every book has a purpose. The purpose of this book is not merely to recount history or describe geography, but to invite readers to reflect on one of the most enduring political questions of the modern Middle East—the Kurdish question.

The Greater Kurdistan presents the author's personal analysis and reflections on the political circumstances surrounding Kurdistan and the Kurdish people. It examines how historical events, regional policies, international interests, and geopolitical decisions have shaped the Kurdish experience and continue to influence its future.

The opening sections provide a brief geographical and historical context to help readers understand the regions discussed throughout the book. They are intended only as a foundation for the political discussions that follow and should not be regarded as a comprehensive history or geographical study of Kurdistan.

The chapters focus primarily on political issues, examining the relationships between the Kurdish people and the governments that have ruled different parts of Kurdistan, as well as the influence of regional and international powers. They also explore questions of identity, justice, self-determination, diplomacy, human rights, and the continuing search for a peaceful and lasting solution to the Kurdish question.

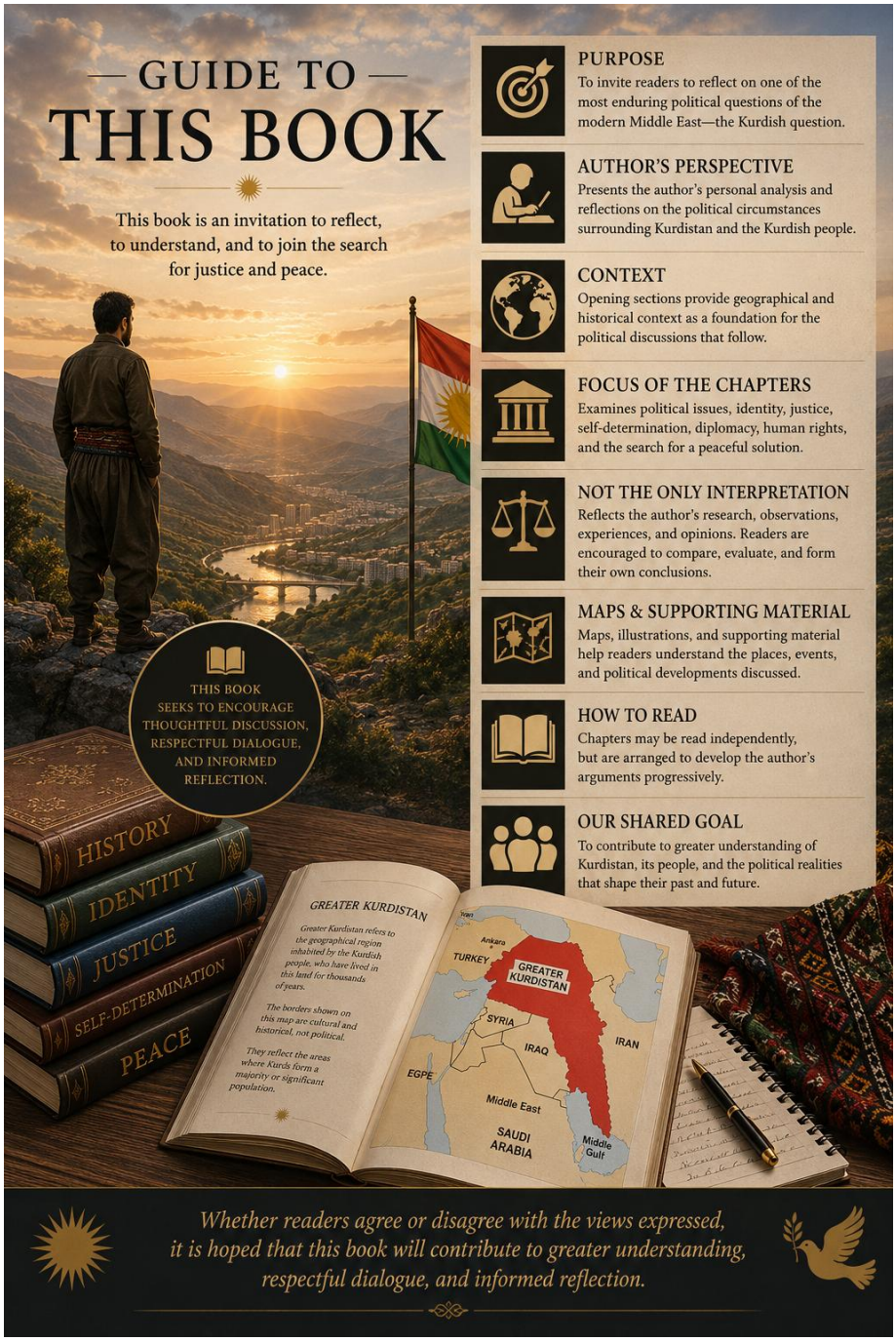
This book does not claim to present the only interpretation of these complex issues. Rather, it reflects the author's research, observations, experiences, and opinions. Readers are encouraged to consider the arguments presented, compare them with other sources and perspectives, and form their own conclusions.

The maps, illustrations, and supporting material included throughout the book are intended to assist readers in understanding the places, events, and political developments discussed in the text.

Although individual chapters may be read independently, they have been arranged to develop the author's arguments progressively. Reading the book from beginning to end

will provide the fullest understanding of the themes explored throughout this publication.

Above all, this book seeks to encourage thoughtful discussion about Kurdistan, its people, and the political realities that have shaped their past and continue to influence their future. Whether readers agree or disagree with the views expressed, it is hoped that this book will contribute to greater understanding, respectful dialogue, and informed reflection.


— GUIDE TO —
THIS BOOK
This book is an invitation to reflect, to understand, and to join the search for justice and peace.
THIS BOOK SEEKS TO ENCOURAGE THOUGHTFUL DISCUSSION, RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE, AND INFORMED REFLECTION.
HISTORY
IDENTITY
JUSTICE
SELF-DETERMINATION
PEACE
PURPOSE
To invite readers to reflect on one of the most enduring political questions of the modern Middle East—the Kurdish question.
AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE
Presents the author's personal analysis and reflections on the political circumstances surrounding Kurdistan and the Kurdish people.
CONTEXT
Opening sections provide geographical and historical context as a foundation for the political discussions that follow.
FOCUS OF THE CHAPTERS
Examines political issues, identity, justice, self-determination, diplomacy, human rights, and the search for a peaceful solution.
NOT THE ONLY INTERPRETATION
Reflects the author's research, observations, experiences, and opinions. Readers are encouraged to compare, evaluate, and form their own conclusions.
MAPS & SUPPORTING MATERIAL
Maps, illustrations, and supporting material help readers understand the places, events, and political developments discussed.
HOW TO READ
Chapters may be read independently, but are arranged to develop the author's arguments progressively.
OUR SHARED GOAL
To contribute to greater understanding of Kurdistan, its people, and the political realities that shape their past and future.
GREATER KURDISTAN
Greater Kurdistan refers to the geographical region inhabited by the Kurdish people, who have lived in this land for thousands of years.
The borders shown on this map are cultural and historical, not political.
They reflect the areas where Kurds form a majority or significant population.
Ankara
TURKEY
GREATER KURDISTAN
SYRIA
IRAQ
IRAN
EGPE
Middle East
SAUDI ARABIA
Middle Gulf
Whether readers agree or disagree with the views expressed, it is hoped that this book will contribute to greater understanding, respectful dialogue, and informed reflection.

Introduction

Political leaders come and go, but the systems, ideologies, and state policies that shape the lives of nations may endure for generations.

In a world marked by shifting alliances, regional rivalry, ideological conflict, and competing geopolitical interests, few questions remain as unresolved and consequential as the Kurdish question. For more than a century, the Kurdish people have lived divided among several states, subjected to different political systems but often confronted by similar policies of denial, assimilation, repression, and exclusion.

This book is not intended to provide a comprehensive history or geographical study of Kurdistan. Historical events and geographical explanations are included only where they are necessary to understand the political message at the heart of this work. The principal purpose of *The Greater Kurdistan* is to examine the political forces that have shaped the Kurdish condition and to present the author's case for a peaceful, democratic, and independent Greater Kurdistan.

The book focuses particularly on the influence of authoritarian, Islamist, and ethno-nationalist ideologies within the political systems of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Azerbaijan. It also considers Armenia where historical Kurdish settlement, contested territorial claims, forced displacement, and the legacy of conflict intersect with the wider question of Red Kurdistan and Kurdish political identity in the South Caucasus. These states are not identical, and their governments have followed different political paths. However, from the author's perspective, their governing structures and regional ambitions have repeatedly contributed to the marginalisation of Kurdish identity, the suppression of Kurdish political aspirations, and the continuation of instability across the region.

The criticism expressed in these pages is directed toward state policies, ruling systems, political ideologies, and institutions of power—not toward the ordinary people of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Azerbaijan, or any other nation. Millions of Kurds living in these countries have endured repression, discrimination, economic hardship, war, and

political exclusion. **Despite these challenges, the Kurdish people have consistently advocated for democracy, equality, and peaceful coexistence.**

Political leaders may change, but the deeper structures of power often remain. For this reason, the central concern of this book is not limited to any particular president, supreme leader, monarch, party, or administration. Individual leaders may embody or intensify certain policies, but the Kurdish question cannot be explained through personalities alone. It must be understood through the longer-lasting ideologies, institutions, security structures, territorial ambitions, and state doctrines that continue beyond the lifetime of any one government.

Among the most concerning developments examined in this book is the combination of religious fundamentalism, aggressive nationalism, authoritarian government, and regional expansionism. When political religion is joined with extreme nationalism and concentrated state power, it can become a means of controlling society, silencing opposition, suppressing minorities, and justifying interference beyond national borders.

This danger is not confined to one country. It can be seen in different forms across the region: in the use of religion to legitimise political authority; in the portrayal of minority identities as threats to national unity; in military interventions presented as matters of national security; and in the restriction of political participation, free expression, and cultural rights.

The consequences reach far beyond domestic politics. They contribute to regional conflict, forced displacement, demographic change, political imprisonment, economic instability, and the weakening of democratic institutions. They also deepen mistrust among communities and make peaceful coexistence increasingly difficult.

For the Kurdish people, these pressures have been particularly severe. Kurdish communities have repeatedly faced the denial of their identity, restrictions upon their language and culture, displacement from their lands, military campaigns, political persecution, and the criminalisation of peaceful demands for recognition and self-government.

Yet the Kurdish question is not merely a story of suffering. It is also a story of survival, political resistance, cultural endurance, and an enduring demand for dignity. Despite division by state borders and decades of repression, Kurdish identity has survived. Kurdish communities have maintained their languages, traditions, political aspirations, and connection to their homeland.

This resilience is central to the message of the book. The Kurdish people should not be viewed only as victims of history or as instruments within the strategies of regional and international powers. They are a nation with their own identity, political agency, interests, and right to participate in determining their future.

The international community has often approached the Kurdish question according to temporary strategic interests. Kurdish movements have at times been supported when their assistance served regional or global objectives and abandoned when political priorities changed. Such an approach has prolonged uncertainty and allowed injustice to continue without a lasting political resolution.

The Kurdish question cannot be resolved through temporary military alliances, selective diplomatic promises, or short-term security arrangements. Nor can it be permanently suppressed through force. A durable solution requires recognition of the Kurdish people as a political community with legitimate national, cultural, and democratic rights.

At the heart of this book is the argument that an independent Greater Kurdistan should be considered not merely as a Kurdish aspiration, but as a serious political proposal for addressing one of the region's most persistent sources of conflict. From the author's perspective, Greater Kurdistan could provide a homeland in which Kurdish identity, language, culture, political participation, and collective security are constitutionally protected.

The case presented here is not based upon hostility towards neighbouring nations or their populations. It is based upon the belief that stable and respectful relations are more likely to develop when peoples are free, recognised, and able to govern

themselves. A democratic Kurdistan need not exist in permanent conflict with its neighbours. It could instead become a bridge between communities, a partner in regional cooperation, and a source of stability in an area repeatedly damaged by dictatorship, fundamentalism, nationalism, and war.

However, independence alone would not guarantee justice or democracy. A future Kurdistan would also need to protect religious, ethnic, linguistic, and political diversity within its own borders. It would need strong institutions, the rule of law, accountable government, equality between women and men, freedom of expression, minority protections, and peaceful relations with neighbouring states.

The vision defended in this book is therefore not simply the creation of another state. It is the creation of a democratic political order capable of learning from the failures of the region. A Greater Kurdistan should not reproduce the authoritarianism, discrimination, corruption, or centralised oppression that Kurdish communities have endured under other governments.

The chapters that follow examine the Kurdish question in relation to regional political systems, international alliances, religious fundamentalism, nationalism, security policies, diplomacy, human rights, and competing visions for the future of the Middle East. They consider the responsibilities of both regional states and international powers, while also asking what role Kurdish political movements must play in shaping a united and democratic future.

This book reflects the author's political analysis, observations, and personal conclusions. It does not claim to present the only interpretation of the complex issues discussed. Readers are encouraged to examine the arguments carefully, compare them with other perspectives, and reach their own conclusions.

Political commentary must be open to disagreement. The purpose of this book is not to prevent debate, but to encourage it. Whether readers support, reject, or question the case presented, it is hoped that they will engage with the Kurdish question as a serious

matter of justice, political rights, and regional stability—not as an issue to be indefinitely ignored or postponed.

The world must recognise that continued silence carries consequences. Injustice left unresolved does not disappear; it deepens resentment, prolongs instability, and creates the conditions for future conflict. Peace cannot be built through the permanent denial of a nation's identity, nor can stability be secured by suppressing the political aspirations of millions of people.

The Kurdish question has remained unresolved for too long. It requires courage, honest international engagement, and a willingness to reconsider political arrangements inherited from an earlier era. It also requires dialogue among Kurdish communities, neighbouring peoples, democratic movements, and the wider international community.

The Greater Kurdistan is offered as a political message, a call for reflection, and an appeal for peaceful action. It invites readers to look beyond temporary governments and individual leaders and to examine the deeper systems that continue to produce repression and instability.

Above all, it asks a fundamental question:

Can lasting peace, democracy, and stability truly be achieved in the Middle East while the Kurdish people remain divided, denied, and politically unrecognised?

The pages that follow present the author's answer to that question and his vision of a different future—one founded not upon domination and denial, but upon dignity, cooperation, justice, and the right of peoples to determine their own destiny.

Understanding the Geography of Kurdistan

"Political borders may divide land, but they cannot erase history, culture, or identity. These are carried not on maps but in the memories, traditions, and aspirations of generations."

Kurdistan is an ancient geographical, historical, and cultural region that extends across parts of present-day Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. For thousands of years, it has been the homeland of the Kurdish people, who have preserved their distinct language, culture, traditions, and identity despite centuries of political change, conflict, and division.

Although Kurdistan is not internationally recognised as a sovereign state with officially defined borders, the name **Kurdistan** has long been used to describe the traditional homeland of the Kurdish nation. Throughout this book, the term **Greater Kurdistan** refers to the historical and geographical region inhabited predominantly by Kurdish communities and reflects the author's interpretation of Kurdistan's historical extent.

For the purpose of this book, Greater Kurdistan is presented as five principal geographical and historical regions: **North Kurdistan (Bakur)**, **East Kurdistan (Rojhilat)**, **South Kurdistan (Bashur)**, **West Kurdistan (Rojava)**, and **Red Kurdistan**. Each region possesses its own geographical characteristics, political circumstances, and historical experiences, while together forming an important part of the broader Kurdish national identity.

The population estimates presented below are intended as general demographic indicators based on information available at the time of preparing the original edition of this book. Actual figures may vary between different sources and continue to change due to migration, conflict, demographic change, and the absence of comprehensive official census data in some areas.

North Kurdistan (Bakur Kurdistan)

Present-day location: Southeastern Turkey

Estimated Kurdish population (2023): Approximately **22 million**

North Kurdistan occupies the largest geographical area of the Kurdish homeland and contains the largest Kurdish population. It includes many of Kurdistan's historic cities, cultural centres, and mountain regions. Throughout modern history, this region has played a significant role in Kurdish political, cultural, and social developments.

East Kurdistan (Rojhilat Kurdistan)

Present-day location: Western Iran

Estimated Kurdish population (2023): Approximately **10 million**

East Kurdistan encompasses the Kurdish-populated provinces of western Iran. The region has a rich cultural heritage and has contributed significantly to Kurdish literature, education, philosophy, and political thought. It continues to occupy an important place within Kurdish history and identity.

South Kurdistan (Bashur Kurdistan)

Present-day location: Northern Iraq

Estimated Kurdish population (2023): Approximately **6 million**

South Kurdistan is situated within northern Iraq and is today the home of the Kurdistan Region, a federal region within Iraq, which enjoys a recognised level of self-government under the Iraqi Constitution. The region has become an important political, economic,

and cultural centre for many Kurds and has played a significant role in contemporary Kurdish affairs.

West Kurdistan (Rojava)

Present-day location: Northern Syria

Estimated Kurdish population (2023): Approximately **3 million**

West Kurdistan, commonly known as **Rojava**, is located in northern Syria. Despite representing a smaller proportion of the overall Kurdish population, the region has attracted considerable international attention in recent years because of developments during the Syrian conflict and the establishment of local self-administration in Kurdish-majority areas.

Red Kurdistan

Present-day location: Parts of present-day Armenia and Azerbaijan

Estimated Kurdish population (2023): Approximately **1 million**

Red Kurdistan refers to the historically Kurdish-inhabited territories located within present-day Armenia and Azerbaijan. During the early twentieth century, the name **Red Kurdistan** was associated with a short-lived administrative district established within the Soviet Union. Although that administrative entity no longer exists, Kurdish communities have continued to live in parts of both countries for many generations.

The history of Red Kurdistan has been shaped by changing political borders, regional conflicts, population movements, and the complex historical relationship between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the former Soviet Union. The demographic composition of the region has changed considerably over time, making precise population estimates difficult. Nevertheless, Kurdish communities continue to form part of the historical and cultural landscape of the South Caucasus.

Terminology Used in This Book

Throughout this book, the names **Bakur (North Kurdistan)**, **Rojhilat (East Kurdistan)**, **Bashur (South Kurdistan)**, **Rojava (West Kurdistan)**, and **Red Kurdistan** are used consistently to identify the geographical and historical regions discussed by the author. These names reflect the terminology adopted throughout this publication and are intended to assist readers in following the historical, political, and geographical discussions presented in the chapters that follow.

The maps included in this book are intended to illustrate the historical and geographical perspectives discussed by the author. They are provided to support the narrative of this publication and to help readers understand the regions and locations referred to throughout the text.

Chapter One

Shadows of Power: Unveiling the Web of Deception

“Power is strongest when it convinces people that they are free while quietly shaping the limits of their choices. The greatest victories of oppression are achieved not by force alone, but by persuading people to accept injustice as normal.”

As darkness settles over the world's great cities, their skylines come alive with dazzling lights. Government buildings stand proudly beside financial towers, places of worship, courtrooms, and media headquarters, each projecting an image of order, stability, and progress. To millions of ordinary people, these symbols represent democracy, justice, prosperity, and hope. Yet behind these impressive façades lies another world—one rarely seen by the public—where power, ambition, wealth, ideology, and influence quietly shape the course of nations.

This hidden world is not confined to one capital or one government. It exists wherever political authority becomes more concerned with preserving itself than serving its people. Governments change, political parties rise and fall, and leaders come and go, yet the structures through which power is exercised often remain remarkably resilient. Their language changes, but their purpose rarely does.

History teaches us that oppression rarely presents itself as oppression. It often arrives disguised as national security, public order, patriotism, religious duty, or economic necessity. It speaks the language of democracy while limiting political choice. It promises equality while protecting privilege. It claims to defend peace while justifying conflict. The most enduring systems of power are those that persuade people to accept injustice without recognising it.

Nowhere is this contradiction more visible than in the story of Kurdistan.

Throughout this book, Kurdistan is understood as the historic homeland of the Kurdish nation. From the author's perspective, Kurdistan has never disappeared; rather, it has been divided and remains under the control of neighbouring states. Although different

parts of Kurdistan are currently administered by Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, the Kurdish people continue to regard their land as one historic homeland whose political unity has been denied for more than a century.

The Kurdish question is therefore not simply a dispute over minority rights. It is, in the author's view, the unresolved question of a nation whose homeland has been partitioned and whose political aspirations have repeatedly been subordinated to the interests of stronger regional powers. Successive governments have changed, borders have shifted, and alliances have been redrawn, yet the central issue has remained remarkably constant: the continued denial of Kurdish national self-determination.

Political deception extends far beyond broken election promises or public scandals. It also includes the selective telling of history, the careful shaping of public opinion, and the use of state institutions to preserve existing political realities. Throughout modern history, countless Kurdish politicians, journalists, academics, writers, and human rights defenders have faced imprisonment, exile, or persecution for advocating democracy, cultural rights, or national self-determination. Their experiences illustrate how power is often exercised not only through military force, but also through laws, education, media, and public narratives.

Law enforcement agencies exist to uphold justice and protect society. Yet when their loyalty shifts from the rule of law to the protection of political authority, justice itself becomes vulnerable. Across occupied regions of Kurdistan, security institutions have frequently been used to suppress political activism, restrict freedom of expression, and discourage peaceful demands for greater political rights. Such practices are not unique to Kurdistan; they reflect a broader global pattern in which state power is sometimes used to preserve political control rather than defend democratic principles.

The growth of digital technology has added another dimension to this relationship between governments and citizens. Surveillance, facial recognition, online monitoring, and mass data collection have transformed the ability of states to observe society. While these measures are often justified in the name of national security, they also raise important questions about privacy, civil liberties, and democratic accountability.

For many Kurdish communities, surveillance has become another instrument through which political activity is monitored and dissent discouraged.

Religion has inspired compassion, justice, and moral guidance throughout history. Yet it has also been exploited by political authorities seeking legitimacy or greater control over society. When faith becomes subordinate to political ambition, it risks losing its moral purpose and becoming another instrument of power. The Kurdish experience reflects this wider challenge, where religious identity has at times been manipulated to weaken national unity or justify political inequality.

Economic power is no less influential than military strength. Natural resources, strategic trade routes, investment, and financial interests frequently shape political decisions more than public declarations or ideological commitments. Kurdistan possesses considerable natural wealth, yet its resources have often become part of wider regional competition. From the author's perspective, economic control has frequently accompanied political control, reinforcing the continued division of Kurdistan while limiting the ability of its people to determine their own future.

Yet history is never written solely by those who hold power. Every generation has produced individuals willing to challenge corruption, expose injustice, and defend the truth. Journalists who refused to remain silent. Academics who questioned official narratives. Human rights defenders who placed principle above personal safety. Ordinary men and women who believed that dignity was worth defending even in the face of persecution. Kurdistan has produced many such voices, and their courage reminds us that truth often survives long after those who attempt to suppress it.

The story of Kurdistan is therefore more than a regional conflict. It is part of the universal struggle between power and justice, between domination and freedom, between imposed political realities and the enduring aspirations of a nation. It challenges us to ask difficult questions about the nature of democracy, the legitimacy of borders, the responsibility of the international community, and the rights of peoples whose voices have too often been overlooked.

This book invites readers to look beyond official narratives and political slogans. It encourages them to examine how power is constructed, how history is interpreted, and how political systems shape our understanding of justice. Above all, it asks whether lasting peace can ever be achieved while the aspirations of an entire nation remain unresolved.

For the author, the answer begins with a simple conviction: **a nation cannot be erased simply because its homeland has been divided, nor can justice be achieved while that division continues to define the lives of its people.**

Chapter Two

The Kurdish Nation: Survival Through History

“A nation does not disappear because its name is removed from maps. It survives in the memory of its people, in the language they speak, in the mountains they call home, and in the hope they refuse to surrender.”

Across the mountains, valleys and plains of Kurdistan, history has left visible and invisible traces of a long national struggle. Ancient settlements, ruined fortresses, abandoned villages and displaced communities all form part of a wider story: the story of a people who have survived repeated conquest, political division and cultural suppression while continuing to preserve their national identity.

The Kurdish experience is often described mainly through suffering, but suffering alone does not explain the survival of the Kurdish nation. The more important question is how a people subjected to centuries of external rule, forced displacement and political denial managed to retain a shared sense of homeland, language and belonging. The answer lies in the strength of Kurdish social memory, cultural continuity and attachment to Kurdistan.

Long before the creation of the modern political borders of the Middle East, Kurdish communities lived throughout the mountainous and fertile regions of Kurdistan. They developed distinctive languages, customs, oral traditions, forms of local authority and systems of social organisation. The land occupied an important geographical position between Mesopotamia, Anatolia, the Iranian plateau and the Caucasus. This location connected important trade routes and gave the region considerable strategic value.

The geography of Kurdistan, however, also made it vulnerable to outside ambition. Successive empires sought to control its mountain passages, fertile valleys, water sources, agricultural lands and later its natural resources. As rival powers competed for dominance, Kurdistan repeatedly became a frontier and a battlefield. Political

decisions were made in distant imperial capitals, while Kurdish villages and families experienced the consequences directly.

At different periods, Kurdish principalities and local rulers exercised varying degrees of authority. Some maintained considerable independence, while others survived through alliances with larger empires. These arrangements were often unstable. Kurdish leaders could be treated as valuable allies during military conflict and then weakened or removed when central governments sought greater control.

This recurring pattern became one of the defining features of Kurdish political history. Kurdish support was welcomed when it served the military or strategic interests of powerful rulers, but Kurdish autonomy was restricted when it appeared to challenge central authority. The relationship between Kurdish communities and surrounding empires was therefore shaped by both cooperation and conflict.

The disappearance of earlier empires did not lead to the disappearance of Kurdistan. Governments changed, ruling dynasties collapsed and political systems were replaced, but Kurdish communities continued to live in their ancestral homeland. They preserved their identity through language, family structures, literature, music, oral history and local customs.

This continuity presents an important historical paradox. Many empires that once appeared permanent eventually vanished, while the Kurdish nation, despite being denied an internationally recognised modern state, maintained a strong and recognisable identity across generations.

The early twentieth century created new expectations for the Kurdish people. The First World War brought the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and a major transformation of the regional political order. International leaders began speaking about national rights and the principle of self-determination. Many communities living under former imperial rule believed they would be allowed to establish their own political futures.

Kurdish leaders and intellectuals also viewed this period as a possible turning point. The Treaty of Sèvres, signed in 1920, included provisions that offered a possible route

towards Kurdish autonomy and, under certain conditions, future independence. Although these provisions were limited and uncertain, they created hope that Kurdistan might eventually receive international political recognition.

This hope was not fulfilled. The political and military developments that followed led to the replacement of the Treaty of Sèvres by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. The later agreement established a new regional settlement but did not provide for an independent Kurdish state. The interests of powerful governments, the success of the Turkish nationalist movement and changing diplomatic alliances became more influential than earlier promises of Kurdish self-determination.

The consequences were profound. Instead of gaining recognised sovereignty, Kurdistan was divided under the authority of neighbouring states. A nation living in its historic homeland was increasingly presented as a collection of minority communities within newly consolidated political systems. This changed not only the administration of the land but also the language used to describe the Kurdish question.

Throughout this book, Kurdistan is understood as the historic homeland of the Kurdish nation. Its different regions remain under the occupation and administration of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia and Azerbaijan. From this perspective, Kurds are not a people who simply migrated into these states. They are a nation whose homeland was divided and incorporated into political systems established or consolidated over Kurdish territory.

This distinction is central to the argument of the book. Describing Kurds only as minorities can hide the territorial and national dimensions of the Kurdish question. Minority rights are important, but the Kurdish struggle also concerns the rights of a nation to political recognition, self-government and self-determination within its own homeland.

Following the division of Kurdistan, the Kurdish people experienced different forms of political control. The methods varied between governments and historical periods, but many policies shared similar purposes. They sought to weaken Kurdish national

consciousness, restrict political organisation and prevent the creation of a unified movement for Kurdistan.

Language was one of the main areas of control. In different regions and at different times, Kurdish education, publishing, broadcasting and public cultural expression were restricted or prohibited. Place names were changed, Kurdish political organisations were outlawed, and public references to Kurdish nationhood were treated as threats to state unity.

Military campaigns and security policies also affected Kurdish society. Villages were destroyed, families were displaced and large areas were placed under military control. Political activists, writers, journalists and community leaders faced imprisonment, exile or other forms of punishment. Demographic policies and population transfers further altered the character of some Kurdish regions.

The experiences of Kurdish communities were not identical in every part of Kurdistan. Each occupying state developed its own legal, political and military structures. Nevertheless, the shared experience of denial created a strong sense of common identity across political borders.

Kurdish culture played a major role in preserving that identity. Language, music, storytelling, poetry, dance, traditional clothing and Newroz celebrations became more than cultural practices. They also became methods of maintaining historical memory and national consciousness.

Families were especially important in this process. Where schools and public institutions did not teach Kurdish history or language, parents and grandparents carried that responsibility. Stories about villages, uprisings, displacement and resistance passed from one generation to the next. Through these memories, children learned that the borders surrounding them did not define the full history of their homeland.

The persistence of Kurdish identity demonstrates that cultural suppression does not necessarily produce cultural disappearance. In many cases, attempts to ban or weaken Kurdish expression strengthened the determination to preserve it. Language and

tradition became forms of quiet resistance because they kept alive a national identity that governments attempted to marginalise.

Political repression also contributed to the development of Kurdish parties and national movements. These organisations emerged in different regions of Kurdistan and adopted different ideologies, leadership structures and political methods. Some participated in elections and parliamentary politics. Others focused on diplomacy, civil society, cultural rights or regional autonomy. Some turned to armed struggle when peaceful political activity was prohibited or violently suppressed.

The history of these organisations is complex. Kurdish parties have achieved important political gains, defended communities and brought international attention to the Kurdish question. They have also experienced rivalry, ideological conflict, leadership disputes and periods of armed confrontation with one another.

No single organisation represents the entire Kurdish nation. The Kurdish struggle has developed through many movements, parties, intellectual traditions and popular campaigns. Although their methods and objectives have not always been identical, many have shared a commitment to protecting Kurdish identity and advancing the political rights of Kurdistan.

For this reason, the wider Kurdish cause should not be reduced to the history of one party or one leader. Political organisations may rise, divide, change direction or disappear, while the national question remains. The future of Kurdistan depends upon recognising that political parties are instruments of the national struggle rather than owners of it.

Kurdish political unity does not require complete ideological agreement. A democratic national movement can contain conservative, socialist, liberal, religious, secular and other political viewpoints. Diversity itself is not the main danger. The greater danger arises when temporary party interests become more important than the collective interests of Kurdistan.

Internal divisions have repeatedly weakened the Kurdish position. Rival parties have sometimes formed competing alliances with surrounding states, even when those states opposed Kurdish national aspirations. These relationships may have produced temporary advantages, but they have also increased mistrust and reduced the ability of Kurdish movements to develop a shared national strategy.

A stronger future requires cooperation on fundamental national principles. Kurdish parties do not need to agree on every policy, but they should be able to recognise common objectives such as the defence of Kurdistan, protection of Kurdish communities, democratic government, human rights and the right to self-determination.

The developments of the twenty-first century have demonstrated both Kurdish political capacity and continuing Kurdish vulnerability. In several regions, Kurdish-led administrations and political institutions have shown that Kurdish communities can govern, provide public services, organise security and participate in regional affairs.

These achievements challenge the claim that Kurdish self-government would necessarily produce disorder. They demonstrate that Kurdish society possesses the political, administrative and social capacity required to manage its own affairs. At the same time, these developments remain vulnerable because they operate within an unstable regional and international environment.

Powerful states have repeatedly worked with Kurdish forces when this served their military or strategic interests. Kurdish fighters have been praised for confronting common enemies and contributing to regional security. However, this cooperation has not always produced lasting support for Kurdish political rights.

When strategic priorities change, international governments may reduce their support, form new alliances or treat Kurdish achievements as negotiable. This has reinforced a deep historical mistrust among Kurdish communities. The pattern resembles earlier periods in which Kurdish assistance was valued during conflict but Kurdish aspirations were abandoned during political settlement.

Despite these disappointments, the Kurdish nation has continued to develop culturally, politically and socially. Millions of Kurds remain connected to Kurdistan, while a large global diaspora has expanded Kurdish political and cultural activity beyond the region.

Kurdish communities abroad have established cultural centres, media organisations, academic networks, political associations and human rights campaigns. Writers, artists, journalists, scientists and professionals have helped introduce Kurdish history and political concerns to wider international audiences.

The diaspora has therefore become an important part of the national movement. Many Kurds living outside Kurdistan do not consider themselves permanently separated from their homeland. Instead, they see themselves as representatives of a nation whose political status remains unresolved.

The Kurdish question is not solely a dispute over land, nor is it simply a matter of cultural recognition. It concerns history, identity, sovereignty, justice and the principle that nations should have the right to determine their own political future.

Lasting peace in the region cannot be achieved by treating Kurdish demands only as security problems. Military control may restrict political activity for a period, but it cannot permanently remove the causes of conflict. Stability requires political solutions based on recognition, negotiation and respect for national rights.

The vision of Greater Kurdistan presented in this book is not based on hostility towards neighbouring peoples. It is based on the belief that Kurds, Turks, Persians, Arabs, Armenians and Azerbaijanis should be able to live in peace and mutual respect. Justice for Kurdistan does not require collective punishment, forced displacement or denial of the rights of others.

The Kurdish question should therefore be addressed through democratic and peaceful political processes. Any lasting settlement must protect the dignity, security and rights of all communities while recognising the Kurdish nation’s legitimate claim to self-determination.

The history of Kurdistan demonstrates that occupation and political division can create prolonged suffering, but they cannot easily erase a deeply rooted national identity. The Kurdish people have survived because their connection to their land, language and shared memory has remained stronger than the political systems created to divide them.

The future of Kurdistan remains uncertain, but the Kurdish national question remains unresolved. As long as the political causes of division, denial and occupation continue, the struggle for recognition and self-determination will also continue.

Ankara
TURKEY
GREATER KURDISTAN
SYRIA
IRAQ
IRAN
Middle East
Middle Gulf
SAUDI ARABIA
A NATION DOES NOT DISAPPEAR BECAUSE ITS NAME IS REMOVED FROM MAPS. IT SURVIVES IN THE MEMORY OF ITS PEOPLE, IN THE LANGUAGE THEY SPEAK, IN THE MOUNTAINS THEY CALL HOME, AND IN THE HOPE THEY REFUSE TO SURRENDER.
MEMORY
LANGUAGE
CULTURE
RESILIENCE

Chapter Three

The Machinery of State Control in Kurdistan

"Power is maintained not only through armies, but through laws, institutions, borders and the authority to define who belongs."

The political control of Kurdistan has never depended upon military force alone. Armies have suppressed uprisings and secured territory, but the daily administration of Kurdish regions has been maintained through constitutions, legal systems, provincial boundaries, education policies, citizenship rules, economic institutions and security structures. These mechanisms have allowed governments to exercise authority over Kurdish society even during periods when open conflict was limited.

The states administering Kurdistan developed different political systems, but each faced the same fundamental problem: how to incorporate a large Kurdish population without recognising a separate Kurdish source of political sovereignty. Their responses were shaped by their own histories, yet they frequently relied upon similar institutional methods. National identity was defined through constitutions, official languages were established through law, provincial boundaries were controlled from central capitals, and local political authority remained subject to state supervision.

The importance of these institutions is sometimes hidden by the more visible history of war and repression. Military campaigns attract international attention, while administrative policies often operate quietly over decades. Yet a census can alter the legal identity of an entire population. A provincial boundary can separate a city from its surrounding Kurdish region. An education law can prevent generations of children from studying in their mother tongue. A budgetary system can transfer the wealth of a resource-rich region to the central state while leaving local authorities economically dependent.

Understanding these mechanisms is essential because they reveal how political control becomes part of ordinary life. The Kurdish question is reproduced not only on

battlefields but also in schools, courts, municipal offices, property registers, identity documents and national budgets.

Despite the extensive political, legal, military and administrative measures adopted throughout the past century, the principal objective of eliminating Kurdish national identity has never been achieved. Governments changed, constitutions were rewritten, borders were reinforced and political systems evolved, yet the Kurdish nation continued to preserve its identity across every part of Kurdistan. The experience of the Kurdish people demonstrates that national identity cannot be created or destroyed solely through the authority of the state. It survives through language, collective memory, cultural traditions, shared history and the determination of successive generations to preserve their heritage.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to this resilience is the Kurdish language itself. Throughout different periods, governments imposed restrictions on its public use, prohibited or limited its teaching in schools, discouraged its use in official institutions and attempted to replace it with the dominant language of the state. Yet millions of Kurds continued to speak Kurdish within their homes, villages, towns and communities. Parents taught their children the language of their ancestors, grandparents preserved traditional stories, poetry and folklore, while Kurdish writers, musicians, scholars and artists continued to enrich one of the oldest living languages of the Middle East. Today, Kurdish remains one of the region's largest indigenous languages, spoken by tens of millions of people across Greater Kurdistan and throughout the Kurdish diaspora. Rather than disappearing, it has continued to develop through literature, education, journalism, broadcasting, digital media and academic research.

The same resilience can be observed in Kurdish culture. Despite repeated attempts to assimilate or marginalise Kurdish identity, traditional music, literature, dance, clothing, oral history and customs have continued to flourish. Celebrations such as Newroz remain powerful expressions of Kurdish history, unity and cultural continuity, bringing together millions of Kurds across different states and continents. Kurdish artists, authors, historians and academics have ensured that the cultural heritage of the

Kurdish nation has not merely survived but has continued to expand and enrich itself despite the political obstacles placed before it.

Equally remarkable has been the preservation of Kurdish national consciousness. Although international borders divided Kurdistan among several states, they failed to divide the historical memory shared by the Kurdish people. Whether living in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia, Azerbaijan or within Kurdish communities throughout Europe, North America and Australia, millions of Kurds continue to recognise themselves as belonging to one historic nation connected by a common language, history, culture and homeland. Political views regarding the future constitutional status of Kurdistan may differ, but the overwhelming majority continue to preserve a strong attachment to their Kurdish identity.

The Kurdish diaspora has further strengthened this process. Communities established outside the Middle East have created cultural centres, educational institutions, media organisations, research institutes and civil society organisations dedicated to preserving the Kurdish language and promoting Kurdish history and culture. Instead of weakening Kurdish identity, migration has enabled Kurdish heritage to gain wider international recognition while ensuring that future generations remain connected to their national roots.

The experience of the Kurdish nation over the past century therefore offers an important historical lesson. States possess the authority to govern territory, enact laws, define administrative boundaries and exercise political power, but they cannot permanently erase the identity of a people whose language, culture and historical consciousness continue to be transmitted from one generation to the next. Attempts to deny Kurdish nationhood have undoubtedly caused immense suffering and hardship, yet they have failed to eliminate the Kurdish nation itself. Instead, these policies have often reinforced the determination of Kurdish communities to preserve their language, culture and national identity.

The continued existence of the Kurdish nation should not be interpreted as opposition to peaceful coexistence with neighbouring peoples. Rather, it demonstrates that

genuine peace and long-term stability are more likely to be achieved through recognition, equality and mutual respect than through policies of denial or forced assimilation. After more than a century of political division, the Kurdish people continue to preserve and strengthen their language, culture and national identity. There is every reason to believe that this process will continue until the Kurdish people are able to enjoy the full recognition, dignity and political rights to which every nation is entitled within their historic homeland of Greater Kurdistan. The future stability of the region will depend not upon the continued denial of Kurdish identity, but upon the willingness of governments and the international community to replace exclusion with justice, equality, democracy and peaceful coexistence.

Chapter Four

Democracy's Deceit: Unmasking the Illusion of Democratic Elections

"An election is not truly democratic when the people are allowed to vote but are denied a genuine choice."

Elections are often presented as proof that a country is democratic. Citizens enter polling stations, political parties campaign, candidates make promises, and governments claim legitimacy through the ballot box. Yet voting alone does not create democracy. An election can take place while power remains tightly controlled, opposition voices are restricted, the media is manipulated, and the final outcome is shaped long before the public casts its vote.

Across Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Azerbaijan and Armenia, elections have often taken place under very different political systems. Some of these states describe themselves as republics, some hold parliamentary elections, and others maintain strong presidential or religious authority. Their structures are not identical, but in many cases the political process has failed to provide Kurdish citizens with equal representation, genuine political freedom or meaningful influence over the future of their homeland.

The illusion begins with the idea of choice. In a real democracy, citizens should be able to choose between independent political movements that can campaign freely and compete under equal conditions. In practice, governments may decide which parties are permitted to operate, which candidates may stand, and which political ideas are considered acceptable. Kurdish political movements are often tolerated only when they remain within limits defined by the state. When they demand recognition of Kurdish nationhood, greater autonomy or political self-determination, they may face bans, arrests, prosecutions or accusations of threatening national security.

This means that Kurdish voters may be allowed to participate in an election while being denied the right to vote freely for the political future they truly support. They can choose between approved candidates, but the most important question—the political status of

Kurdistan—is often excluded from debate. Elections therefore become a method of controlling political participation rather than an opportunity to challenge the foundations of state power.

Media control strengthens this system. Political campaigns depend on television, newspapers, online platforms and public meetings. When governments or powerful business interests dominate these channels, they can decide which voices receive attention and which are ignored. Government-friendly candidates are presented as stable and patriotic, while opposition groups may be described as dangerous, disloyal or connected to violence.

Fear is one of the most effective political tools. Citizens may be warned that voting for Kurdish parties will lead to instability, separatism or war. Economic difficulties may be blamed on opposition movements, while state leaders present themselves as the only figures capable of maintaining order. Through repetition, propaganda can make repression appear necessary and political obedience appear responsible.

The result is not always the complete absence of opposition. In many cases, opposition parties are allowed to exist, but they compete in an environment that strongly favours those already in power. State institutions, public resources, media access and security forces may all be used to protect the ruling establishment. Elections continue, but the balance between government and opposition is so unequal that the democratic process loses much of its meaning.

Money also shapes political power. Wealthy companies, influential families and powerful interest groups can provide financial support to political parties and candidates. In return, they may expect favourable contracts, protection of their business interests or influence over government policy. When political success depends heavily on access to money, ordinary citizens become less powerful while wealthy networks gain greater control.

This connection between money and politics is not limited to one country. It can be found in many political systems, including established democracies. However, it

becomes especially dangerous where institutions are weak, corruption is widespread and public accountability is limited. In such environments, elections can protect an existing elite rather than give citizens the power to replace it.

Political dynasties create another barrier to genuine democracy. In some states, power remains concentrated among a small number of families, parties or networks. Relatives and close allies are appointed to senior political, military and economic positions. Access to influence depends less on ability or public support and more on loyalty, family connections and personal relationships.

This weakens the principle that every citizen should have an equal opportunity to participate in public life. It also creates a political class that can survive even when individual leaders leave office. Governments may change their public image, but the same families, institutions and interests continue to control the state.

The right to vote can also be weakened without being formally removed. Electoral boundaries may be designed to reduce the influence of particular communities. Registration rules may make voting more difficult for displaced people, poor citizens or those without official documents. Polling stations may be limited in opposition areas, and citizens may face pressure from employers, officials or security forces.

For Kurdish communities, displacement creates an additional problem. When people are removed from their homes, denied citizenship or forced to live far from their original towns and villages, their political representation is also weakened. Demographic change can therefore affect not only the ethnic character of a region but also the outcome of elections and the distribution of political power.

In parts of Kurdistan, local representatives have won public support only to be removed, imprisoned or replaced by officials appointed by central government. Such actions send a clear message: Kurdish citizens may vote, but their decision will be respected only when it does not challenge state authority. This turns democracy into a conditional privilege rather than a protected right.

Electoral fraud can take many forms. Ballots may be manipulated, votes may be counted without independent observation, opposition candidates may be intimidated, and public employees may be pressured to support the ruling party. In other cases, governments may not need to alter the final count because they have already controlled the entire process through candidate restrictions, media dominance and legal pressure.

The greatest deception is therefore not always found inside the ballot box. It is often found in everything that happens before the ballot is cast. When political organisations are banned, journalists are silenced, activists are arrested and public debate is restricted, the election result cannot be understood as the free expression of the people.

These weaknesses have serious consequences beyond politics. When governments are not genuinely accountable, abuses of power become more difficult to challenge. Human rights can be restricted, corruption can spread and security institutions can operate without proper oversight. Courts may protect the state instead of protecting citizens, while laws are used selectively against political opponents.

For Kurdish communities, the failure of democracy has often meant that questions of language, education, land, local government and national identity remain unresolved. The political system may allow discussion of minor cultural rights while refusing to consider the deeper issue of Kurdish nationhood. Citizens are invited to participate, but only within boundaries created by those who already hold power.

This does not mean that elections are meaningless or that political participation should be abandoned. Kurdish political parties, civil society groups, journalists, lawyers and human rights organisations have used elections to expose injustice, represent local communities and bring Kurdish concerns into public debate. Even within restricted systems, political participation can create space for resistance and public awareness.

However, elections should not be confused with full democracy. Democracy requires more than voting. It requires freedom of expression, independent courts, fair access to

the media, equal political rights, protection from intimidation and respect for the result. It also requires governments to recognise that citizens have the right to question the structure of the state itself.

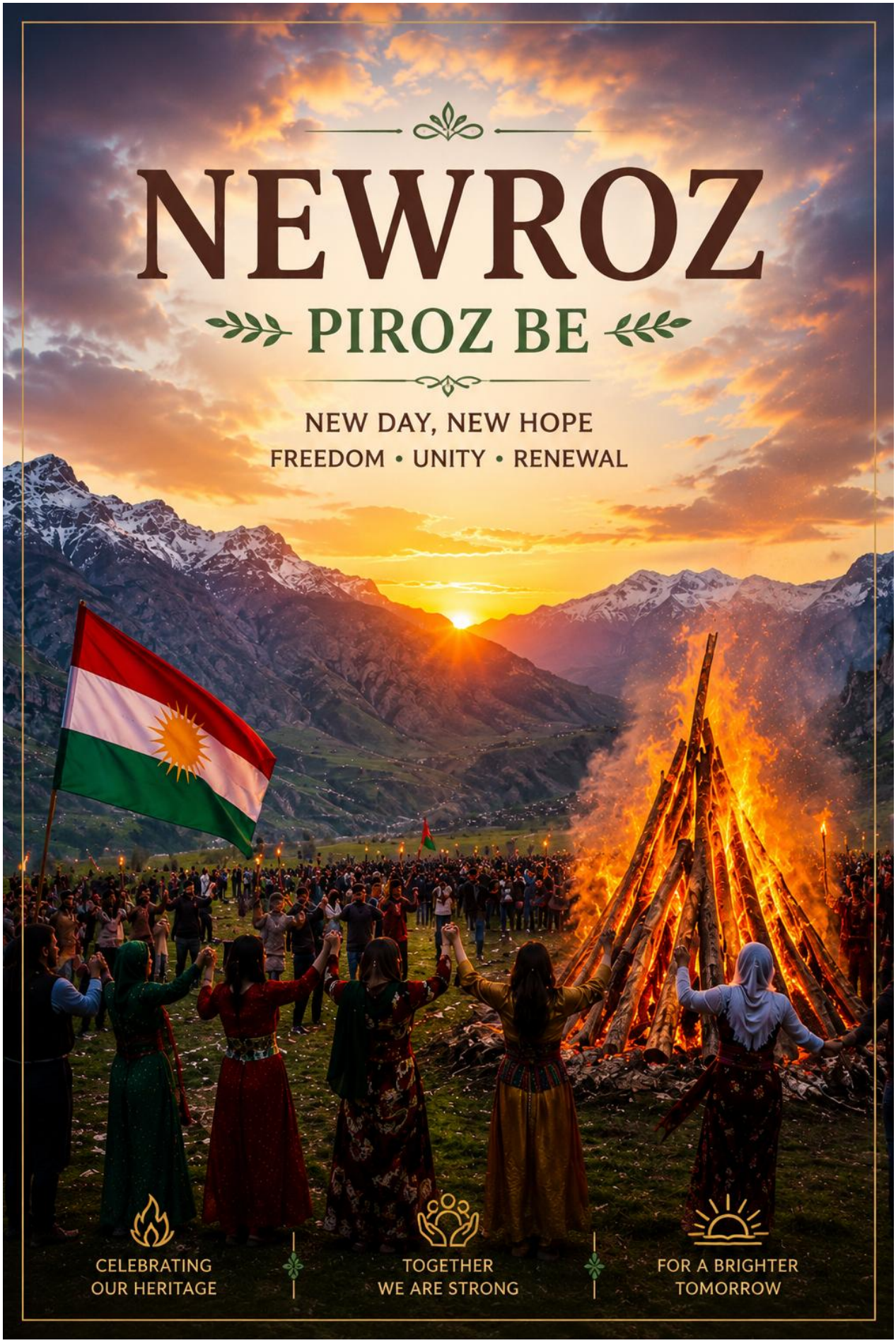
Reform is possible only when people understand how democratic systems can be manipulated. Independent election monitoring, transparent campaign finance, free journalism and stronger protection for opposition parties can reduce abuse. Local government must be allowed to function without constant interference from central authorities, and elected representatives must not be removed simply because their political views challenge the state.

Kurdish citizens also have an important role. Political division, corruption and loyalty to parties above national interests can weaken Kurdish representation from within. Democracy cannot become meaningful if Kurdish political organisations repeat the same practices they criticise in central governments. Accountability, internal democracy and public service must also exist within Kurdish institutions.

The struggle for democracy is therefore not only a struggle against oppressive states. It is also a struggle to build a political culture based on honesty, responsibility and respect for the people. Kurdish leaders must earn public trust rather than simply demand it. Political power must be treated as a duty, not as personal property.

The true test of democracy is not whether governments organise elections. It is whether people can challenge power without fear, choose their representatives freely and decide the political future of their own communities. Until Kurdish citizens are able to participate on equal terms and discuss the future of Kurdistan without criminalisation, elections will continue to offer only a limited form of political choice.

A ballot paper can give the appearance of freedom. Genuine democracy begins only when the people have the power to make that freedom real.


NEWROZ
PIROZ BE
NEW DAY, NEW HOPE
FREEDOM • UNITY • RENEWAL
CELEBRATING
OUR HERITAGE
TOGETHER
WE ARE STRONG
FOR A BRIGHTER
TOMORROW

Chapter Five

Modern Turkey and the Kurdish Question

"History demonstrates that lasting peace cannot be built by denying identity, nor can stability endure where justice remains incomplete."

The creation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 marked the beginning of a new political era in the Middle East. Emerging from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War, the new republic sought to build a strong, secular and unified nation-state. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, sweeping reforms transformed the country's political institutions, legal system, education and economy. These reforms laid the foundations of modern Turkey, but they also profoundly changed the relationship between the state and its diverse peoples, particularly the Kurds.

For centuries, the Ottoman Empire had governed a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. While ultimate authority rested with the Sultan, many regions enjoyed varying degrees of local autonomy. Kurdish emirates and tribal leaders often administered their own affairs while remaining loyal to the empire. Although this system was neither democratic nor free from conflict, it allowed Kurdish language, traditions and social structures to survive without a systematic policy aimed at eliminating Kurdish identity.

The Republic of Turkey adopted a different vision. Having witnessed the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire through nationalist movements and foreign intervention, its founders believed that the survival of the new state required a single national identity based upon one language, one citizenship and one nation. From the perspective of the new leadership, unity was considered essential for political stability and national security. However, this vision inevitably created tensions with communities whose identities extended beyond the new definition of Turkish nationhood.

Among these communities, the Kurds represented the largest non-Turkish population within the republic. They possessed their own language, rich cultural traditions and a long historical connection to the mountainous region historically known as Kurdistan, which today extends across Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran. Many Kurds regarded

themselves not simply as an ethnic minority but as a nation whose homeland had been divided by international borders established after the First World War. The difference between these competing understandings of nationhood became one of the defining political issues of modern Turkey.

Throughout much of the twentieth century, successive governments introduced policies intended to strengthen a unified Turkish identity. During various periods, restrictions affected the public use of the Kurdish language, Kurdish publications and cultural expression. Numerous villages, towns and geographical locations were given Turkish names, while expressions of Kurdish national identity frequently encountered legal and political obstacles. Many Kurds viewed these measures as attempts to assimilate them into a single national culture rather than recognising the country's ethnic and linguistic diversity.

These policies extended beyond language and culture. Political participation also became a source of continuing tension. Kurdish political parties were repeatedly dissolved by the courts, while Kurdish politicians, journalists, academics and activists often faced prosecution under laws concerning national security or territorial integrity. Although the intensity of these measures varied between governments and historical periods, many Kurdish citizens believed that peaceful demands for greater cultural recognition and political reform were frequently met with suspicion rather than constructive dialogue.

The resulting frustration produced a wide spectrum of Kurdish political responses. Many individuals and organisations continued to pursue constitutional reform through democratic politics, civil society, journalism and human rights advocacy. Others concluded that decades of failed political engagement left little prospect for meaningful change. As a result, armed movements also emerged, reflecting the deep divisions and unresolved grievances that had accumulated over generations. Kurdish political opinion has never been uniform, encompassing advocates of peaceful reform, federalism, autonomy and independence, as well as those who believed that armed resistance was justified after prolonged political exclusion.

The conflict that developed over subsequent decades cannot be understood solely through the language of security or military confrontation. It was also rooted in competing understandings of citizenship, identity and equality. Successive Turkish governments generally approached the conflict as a matter of protecting national unity and territorial integrity. By contrast, many Kurds regarded their struggle as one for the recognition of their language, culture and national identity after decades of policies that they believed denied these fundamental rights. These contrasting perspectives shaped one of the longest and most complex political conflicts in the modern Middle East.

Despite recurring periods of violence, many Kurdish intellectuals consistently argued that the Kurdish question could not be resolved through military means alone. They maintained that lasting peace required constitutional reform, equal citizenship, judicial independence and genuine recognition of Kurdish cultural and linguistic rights. These ideas gained increasing support during periods when democratic reforms appeared possible.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Turkey entered a period of significant political change. Reforms associated with the country's aspirations to strengthen relations with the European Union encouraged greater discussion of democracy, minority rights and judicial reform. Restrictions on Kurdish broadcasting and cultural activities were eased in certain areas, universities began to study Kurdish language and literature more openly, and public debate concerning the Kurdish question became more visible than it had been during previous decades.

For many Kurds, these developments created cautious optimism. There was growing hope that decades of mistrust could gradually give way to political dialogue and democratic reform. Discussions concerning peace, constitutional change and cultural recognition suggested that a negotiated settlement might eventually become possible. While disagreements remained profound, many observers believed that the opportunity existed to replace conflict with political engagement.

Nevertheless, progress proved fragile. Political reforms advanced and retreated as domestic politics, regional conflicts and security concerns evolved. The trust necessary

for meaningful reconciliation remained limited, and many of the underlying historical grievances were never fully addressed. Events beyond Turkey's borders would soon transform the Kurdish question from a primarily domestic issue into one with major regional and international implications.

The wars in Iraq and Syria fundamentally reshaped the political landscape of the Middle East. Following the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq and later the emergence of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, Kurdish communities demonstrated that they could build functioning civil institutions under exceptionally difficult conditions. These developments challenged long-standing assumptions that Kurdish political aspirations were incompatible with regional stability. Instead, they presented new examples of Kurdish self-government operating within some of the region's most difficult political environments.

For many Kurds, these developments represented more than administrative success. They demonstrated that Kurdish identity, democratic participation and responsible governance could coexist. They also renewed hopes that peaceful political solutions based upon equality and mutual recognition might one day replace decades of conflict. Yet these developments would also bring new regional tensions, drawing international powers into the Kurdish question in ways that would reshape its future.

The Kurdish question entered a new era as conflicts in Iraq and Syria reshaped the political landscape of the Middle East. What had long been viewed primarily as an internal issue within Turkey gradually became an international matter involving regional powers, Western governments and global security interests. The emergence of Kurdish self-administration in neighbouring countries demonstrated new political possibilities while simultaneously creating new diplomatic and security challenges.

The establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq represented the first internationally recognised Kurdish self-governing authority in modern history. Despite political disagreements, economic difficulties and internal rivalries, the Kurdistan Region developed functioning institutions, elected representatives, security forces, universities and an expanding economy. For many Kurds across the Middle

East, The Kurdistan Region demonstrated that Kurdish self-government could contribute to stability and development rather than instability.

The Syrian civil war produced another historic turning point. As the authority of the Syrian state weakened after 2011, Kurdish communities in northern and eastern Syria organised local administrations to provide governance, security, healthcare and education. These institutions, commonly known as the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (Rojava), sought to govern an ethnically and religiously diverse population that included Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians, Armenians, Turkmen and others. Despite the enormous pressures of war, economic sanctions and continuing military threats, local authorities established schools, municipal services, judicial institutions and civil administration under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

The greatest challenge emerged with the rise of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS). As ISIS expanded rapidly across Iraq and Syria, entire communities faced massacres, forced displacement and systematic atrocities. Kurdish forces, including the People's Protection Units (YPG), the Women's Protection Units (YPJ) and later the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), became the principal ground partners of the United States-led international coalition in the campaign against ISIS. Thousands of Kurdish men and women gave their lives defending not only Kurdish towns but also Arab, Assyrian, Yazidi and other civilian populations threatened by extremist violence.

The defence of Kobani became one of the defining moments of the conflict. Against overwhelming odds, Kurdish fighters resisted ISIS in a battle that captured international attention and symbolised resistance to violent extremism. Subsequent operations, including the liberation of Raqqa and other ISIS strongholds, demonstrated the effectiveness of Kurdish-led forces working alongside the international coalition. Their contribution was widely recognised by military leaders and governments involved in the campaign against ISIS and played an important role in the territorial defeat of the organisation.

These sacrifices significantly improved the international standing of Kurdish forces. For many observers, Kurdish fighters became symbols of courage, resilience and

commitment to defending civilian populations. Nevertheless, military cooperation did not lead to corresponding political recognition. Despite administering territory for many years and serving as a key partner against ISIS, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria was not formally recognised by major international powers as a legitimate political authority. Its representatives remained largely excluded from many international negotiations concerning Syria's future.

This outcome caused profound disappointment among many Kurds. They believed that years of effective administration, cooperation with the international coalition and the enormous human cost of defeating ISIS would result in greater international support for their political aspirations. Instead, many governments increasingly prioritised restoring diplomatic engagement with Damascus, maintaining strategic relations with Turkey and preserving regional stability. From the perspective of many Kurdish communities, this reflected a recurring historical pattern in which Kurdish military contributions were welcomed during periods of crisis, while Kurdish political aspirations received limited international support once broader geopolitical priorities changed.

These developments became even more significant as political authority in Syria continued to evolve. Many Kurdish observers expressed concern that international engagement with new political actors, including groups with Islamist backgrounds that had become influential in parts of Syria, risked marginalising the Autonomous Administration despite its years of governance and its contribution to regional security. Whether these diplomatic choices will ultimately produce a more stable Syria remains uncertain. However, many Kurds viewed the changing priorities of international powers as evidence that strategic interests often outweigh consistent support for the principle of self-determination.

This perception has deep historical roots. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Kurdish movements have repeatedly cooperated with regional and international powers during periods of conflict. Yet many Kurds believe that political support has often diminished once immediate military objectives were achieved. This experience has reinforced a widespread belief within Kurdish society that the future of the Kurdish nation cannot depend solely upon the changing interests of external

powers but must ultimately be secured through durable political institutions, democratic legitimacy and the support of its own people.

The Kurdish question therefore remains one of the most significant unresolved political issues in the modern Middle East. More than forty million Kurds continue to live across Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran, sharing a common historical identity while experiencing different political realities within each state. Although progress has been made in some regions, no comprehensive settlement has addressed the wider questions of cultural recognition, political representation and the aspirations for greater self-government or self-determination held by many Kurds.

History suggests that lasting peace cannot be achieved through military measures alone. Durable stability requires governments to protect the equal rights of all citizens, respect cultural diversity and create political institutions capable of resolving differences through democratic dialogue rather than violence. Equally, peaceful political engagement offers greater prospects for long-term stability than continued armed confrontation. The experience of the past century demonstrates that neither denial of identity nor prolonged conflict has produced a lasting solution to the Kurdish question.

The history of Rojava provides both inspiration and caution. It demonstrated that Kurdish communities could establish functioning institutions, protect diverse populations and contribute decisively to international security under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. At the same time, it illustrated the limits of relying upon international alliances for long-term political recognition. Military partnership, however valuable, has not necessarily translated into diplomatic recognition or lasting political guarantees.

Modern Turkey has undergone remarkable political, economic and social transformation during the past century. Yet the Kurdish question remains central to its democratic development and to the wider stability of the Middle East. A peaceful and just resolution would not only improve relations between the Turkish state and its Kurdish citizens but would also contribute to greater regional security, economic

cooperation and political stability across a region that has endured generations of conflict.

The previous chapters have explored the history of the Kurdish nation and the mechanisms through which Kurdish identity has been challenged and preserved. This chapter has examined how the evolution of modern Turkey and changing regional politics have shaped the contemporary Kurdish question. The discussion now turns to the future. If more than a century of division, conflict and intermittent reform has not produced a lasting settlement, what alternatives remain? The following chapter examines one of the most important and enduring questions in modern Kurdish history: whether an independent and internationally recognised Kurdistan could provide a durable foundation for peace, security and self-determination in the heart of the Middle East.

Chapter Six

The Cry for Independence: The Quest for a Unified Greater Kurdistan

“No nation should be expected to abandon its identity simply because history denied it a state.”

For more than a century, the Kurdish question has been discussed through the interests of the states that govern Kurdistan rather than through the rights of the Kurdish people themselves. Governments have debated security, borders and regional stability, while the central question has remained unanswered: if every nation has the right to determine its own future, why should the Kurds be the exception?

The dream of an independent Greater Kurdistan is not a recent political invention. It is rooted in the history, culture and identity of a people who have lived across the mountains and plains of Kurdistan for thousands of years. Although empires rose and fell, and new borders divided the region, the Kurdish people continued to preserve their language, traditions and national identity. The desire for self-rule survived every generation because it reflected more than politics. It reflected the belief that a nation should have the right to govern itself.

The division of Kurdistan after the First World War transformed millions of Kurds into minorities within four principal states—Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria—while Kurdish communities also remained in parts of Armenia and Azerbaijan. From that moment, Kurdish political movements were forced to struggle separately, even though they shared the same national identity. Different governments adopted different policies, but the result was remarkably similar. Kurdish demands for recognition were often answered with military force, political repression or cultural assimilation.

Throughout the twentieth century, Kurdish uprisings, political movements and peaceful campaigns repeatedly called for autonomy, federalism or independence. Some sought coexistence within existing states, while others believed that only full independence could guarantee Kurdish survival. Although these movements differed in ideology and

strategy, they were united by one common principle: the Kurdish people should have the right to decide their own political future.

Critics often argue that an independent Kurdistan would destabilise the Middle East. Yet the region has experienced repeated wars, displacement, dictatorship and political instability without an independent Kurdish state. The absence of Kurdistan has not produced peace. Instead, it has left millions of Kurds divided between competing governments, creating one of the world's longest unresolved national questions.

The greatest obstacle to Kurdish independence has never been the absence of a Kurdish nation. It has been the geopolitical interests of powerful states. Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria have consistently opposed any political development that could encourage Kurdish self-determination. At the same time, international powers have often viewed Kurdistan through the lens of regional security, energy resources and strategic alliances rather than justice or international law.

History demonstrates that international support for the Kurds has often depended on political convenience. Kurdish forces have been praised when fighting common enemies, yet their political aspirations have frequently been ignored once military objectives were achieved. This pattern has created deep mistrust among many Kurds, who have repeatedly found themselves treated as valuable allies in war but inconvenient partners in peace.

Supporters of Kurdish independence argue that recognising Kurdistan could strengthen regional stability rather than weaken it. A democratic Kurdish state could become a bridge between neighbouring peoples instead of a battlefield between competing governments. Rather than existing as a permanent source of conflict, Kurdistan could contribute to economic cooperation, regional trade and collective security across the Middle East.

Supporters also argue that an independent Kurdistan could become one of the strongest regional partners against extremism. Kurdish forces have repeatedly demonstrated their willingness to defend their communities against terrorist

organisations, often at enormous human cost. Thousands of Kurdish men and women lost their lives in the struggle against ISIS, protecting not only Kurdistan but also the wider international community. Their sacrifice demonstrated that the Kurdish people are not a source of instability but have often been one of the region's most reliable forces for stability.

An independent Kurdistan would also offer the opportunity to protect one of the Middle East's oldest cultures. Kurdish identity has survived despite decades of prohibition, displacement and political repression. The Kurdish language, literature, music and traditions have endured because they are deeply rooted in the lives of the people. Independence would not create Kurdish identity; it would simply allow it to develop freely without fear of suppression.

However, independence alone cannot guarantee justice. A future Kurdish state must avoid repeating the mistakes that have shaped the modern Middle East. Democracy must be stronger than personality cults. The rule of law must be stronger than tribal loyalty or political patronage. Corruption must not replace occupation as the greatest threat to Kurdish society. The rights of women, religious minorities and every ethnic community living within Kurdistan must be protected equally under the law. A nation that seeks justice for itself must also deliver justice to others.

The Kurdish question should never be understood as a conflict between peoples. Millions of Turks, Arabs, Persians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis have lived peacefully alongside Kurdish communities for generations. The problem is not ordinary citizens. It is political systems that deny one nation the same rights enjoyed by others.

The path towards Kurdish independence should therefore be peaceful, lawful and democratic. Negotiation, dialogue and international mediation offer far greater hope than endless cycles of violence. The principles of the United Nations, particularly the right of peoples to self-determination, provide an international framework through which the Kurdish question can be addressed without threatening the legitimate rights of neighbouring states.

The international community also carries a moral responsibility. For more than a century, global powers have helped shape the political map of the Middle East while leaving the Kurdish question unresolved. They cannot continue to praise democracy and human rights while ignoring one of the world's largest stateless nations. Consistency requires that the same principles applied elsewhere should also apply to the Kurdish people.

The United Nations has an important role to play in encouraging dialogue, protecting human rights and supporting peaceful solutions. Whether the final outcome is federalism, confederation or full independence should ultimately be decided by the Kurdish people themselves through democratic and internationally recognised processes, not through military force or political coercion.

The future of Kurdistan cannot be built upon revenge or hatred. It must be built upon justice, equality and peaceful coexistence with its neighbours. Independence should never be understood as the defeat of another nation. It should be understood as the recognition that the Kurdish people, like every other nation, possess the right to decide their own future.

The Kurdish struggle has lasted for generations because it is rooted in an idea that cannot easily be defeated. Borders can divide a land, governments can suppress a language and armies can occupy territory, but they cannot permanently erase a nation's identity. The dream of Greater Kurdistan has survived because it lives not only in maps or political movements, but in the memories, language and determination of millions of Kurds.

Whether that dream is realised will depend on the courage of the Kurdish people, the wisdom of regional leaders and the willingness of the international community to place justice above political convenience. History has shown that unresolved national questions rarely disappear. They wait until the world is prepared to confront them. The Kurdish question remains one of those unfinished chapters of modern history, and its final resolution will shape not only the future of Kurdistan but also the future stability of the Middle East.

RESPECT
KINDNESS
INCLUSION
EQUALITY
CONFIDENCE
DIVERSITY

Chapter Seven

A Beacon of Hope: The Promise of a Free Greater Kurdistan

“The purpose of freedom is not to replace one conflict with another, but to create a future in which every nation can live with dignity, peace and mutual respect.”

For more than a century, the Kurdish question has been viewed as a problem to be managed rather than an opportunity to be embraced. Governments have focused on preventing Kurdish independence, yet few have asked a different question: what if a free Kurdistan became part of the solution rather than part of the problem?

An independent Greater Kurdistan would not simply change the political map of the Middle East. It could transform the region by replacing one of its longest-running conflicts with a stable, democratic and cooperative partner. A nation that has spent generations struggling for recognition has every reason to value peace, security and international cooperation.

Kurdistan occupies one of the world's most strategic locations. Positioned between Asia, Europe and the Middle East, it has the potential to become a bridge connecting different cultures, economies and political systems. Throughout history, Kurdistan has stood at the crossroads of civilisation. In the future, it could become a crossroads of trade, diplomacy and regional cooperation.

Peace and stability would benefit not only the Kurdish people but also neighbouring countries. A secure Kurdistan could help reduce regional tensions by replacing conflict with dialogue and cooperation. Stable borders, stronger institutions and peaceful relations would encourage investment, tourism and economic development throughout the region.

The Kurdish people have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to resisting terrorism and violent extremism. During the fight against ISIS, Kurdish men and women stood on the front line while the world watched. Thousands gave their lives defending

not only Kurdistan but also international security. Their sacrifice proved that the Kurdish people can be trusted partners in protecting peace and confronting violent extremism.

A democratic Kurdistan could become an important contributor to regional security through intelligence cooperation, border protection and the prevention of radicalisation. Rather than exporting instability, it could become one of the strongest defenders of stability in the Middle East.

Kurdistan also possesses significant natural resources. Its reserves of oil, natural gas, water and minerals have the potential to support both domestic development and international energy cooperation. Managed transparently and responsibly, these resources could strengthen the Kurdish economy while contributing to global energy security and reducing dependence on unstable supply routes.

Economic prosperity would extend beyond Kurdistan's borders. A growing Kurdish economy would create new markets, attract foreign investment and strengthen trade with Europe, Asia and neighbouring states. Roads, railways, pipelines and digital infrastructure linking Kurdistan with surrounding countries could transform the region into an important centre of international commerce.

Yet the greatest strength of Kurdistan is not found beneath the ground but among its people. Despite decades of conflict and political division, Kurdish society has preserved its language, culture and traditions while remaining remarkably open to cooperation with different religions and ethnic communities. A future Kurdish state has the opportunity to demonstrate that diversity is not a weakness but a source of national strength.

A successful Kurdistan must therefore be built upon democratic values. Independence alone is not enough. The future state must protect freedom of expression, independent courts, free elections and equal rights for all citizens. Kurds, Arabs, Turkmen, Assyrians, Armenians, Yazidis, Christians, Muslims and every other community should enjoy equal protection under the law. Justice must belong to everyone, not only to the majority.

This responsibility also belongs to Kurdish leaders. The mistakes that have weakened many states in the Middle East—corruption, political patronage, authoritarian rule and the concentration of power—must not be repeated. The legitimacy of a future Kurdistan will depend not only on achieving independence but on governing with honesty, transparency and accountability.

The international community also stands to benefit from a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question. For decades, global powers have invested enormous political, military and financial resources in managing conflicts across the Middle East. Supporting a fair and lasting settlement for the Kurdish people would contribute to greater regional stability while reducing one of the region's most persistent sources of tension.

A free Kurdistan could build constructive partnerships with Europe, the United States, the United Kingdom, regional neighbours and countries across Asia and Africa. Its foreign policy should be based on cooperation rather than confrontation, promoting trade, education, scientific research and cultural exchange instead of military rivalry.

The path towards this future will not be easy. Negotiation, diplomacy and compromise will all be required. Independence cannot be achieved through hatred or revenge. It must be built upon international law, democratic principles and peaceful dialogue. Lasting peace is achieved not by replacing one injustice with another but by creating a system in which every community feels respected and secure.

The United Nations and the wider international community have an opportunity to help resolve one of the oldest unresolved national questions of the modern era. Their role should not be to choose Kurdistan's future but to ensure that the Kurdish people are allowed to determine that future peacefully, freely and democratically, in accordance with the principle of self-determination recognised under international law.

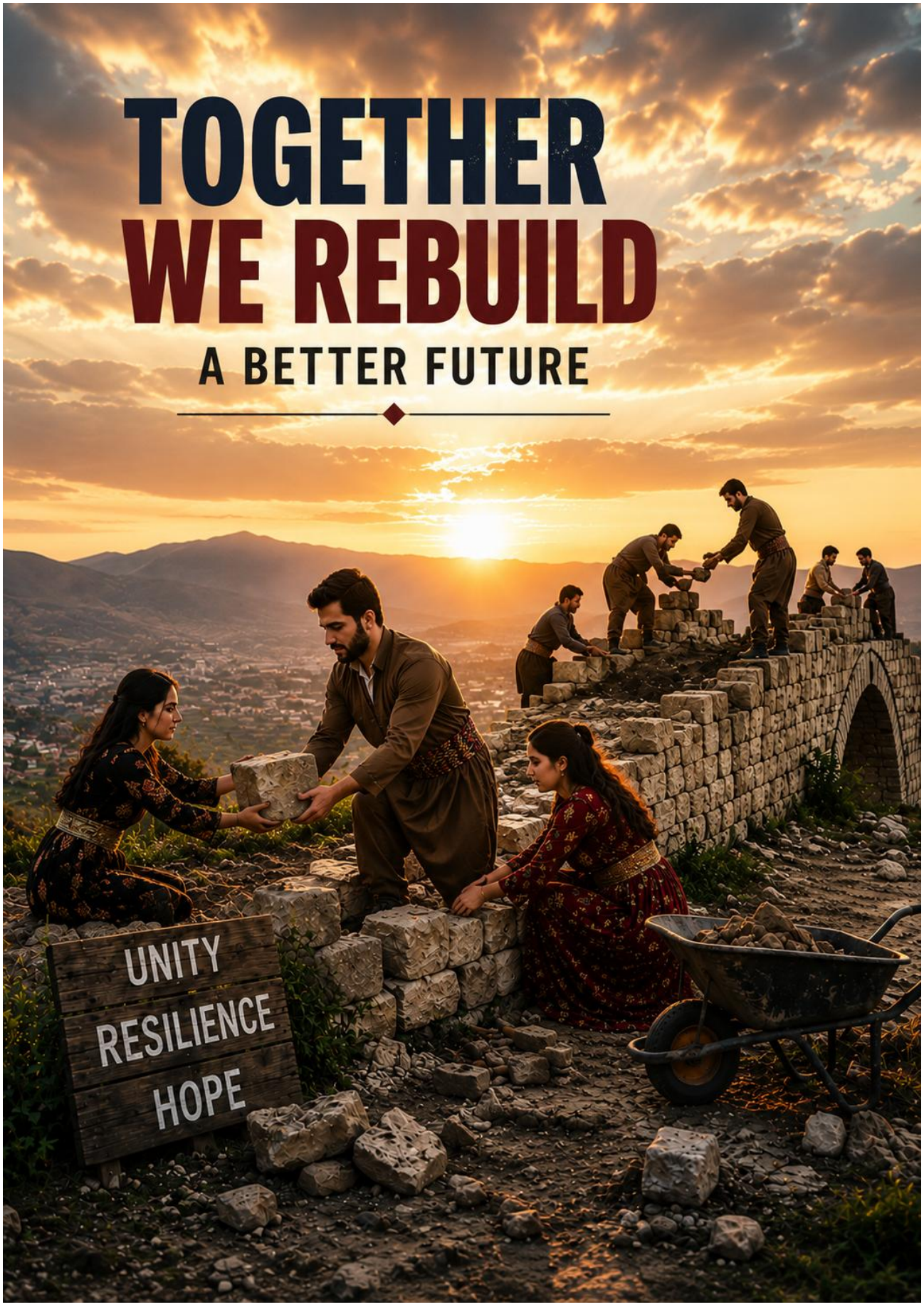
The promise of a free Kurdistan is therefore much greater than the creation of another state. It represents the possibility of replacing conflict with cooperation, repression

with democracy and instability with lasting peace. It offers the chance to demonstrate that justice for one nation does not require injustice towards another.

For more than one hundred years, the Kurdish people have carried the hope of freedom despite war, displacement and political division. That hope has survived because it is built upon a simple principle: every nation deserves the right to live with dignity, protect its identity and decide its own future.

Whether that vision becomes reality depends not only on the determination of the Kurdish people but also on the courage of the international community to apply the principles of democracy, human rights and self-determination consistently. If those principles truly are universal, then they must also apply to Kurdistan.

A peaceful and democratic Greater Kurdistan would not represent the end of history. It would represent the beginning of a new chapter—one in which the Kurdish people finally stand among the nations of the world as equal partners, contributing to peace, prosperity and stability rather than continuing to struggle for the rights that many others already enjoy.


TOGETHER
WE REBUILD
A BETTER FUTURE
UNITY
RESILIENCE
HOPE

Chapter Eight

Shadows and Sunlight: Economics, Power and the Kurdish Question

“Nations often speak the language of justice, but too often they act according to the language of interests.”

Throughout this book, one question appears repeatedly. Why has the Kurdish question remained unresolved for more than a century despite repeated promises of democracy, human rights and the right of peoples to self-determination? The answer cannot be found in history alone. It must also be sought in economics, strategic interests and the balance of global power.

The modern world is shaped not only by governments but also by markets, multinational corporations and financial institutions. Oil, natural gas, trade routes, arms sales and strategic alliances influence international decisions as much as political ideals. In many cases, economic interests determine foreign policy more than the principles that governments publicly defend.

This reality has affected Kurdistan throughout modern history. The land of Kurdistan possesses significant reserves of oil, natural gas, water and valuable minerals. It also occupies one of the world's most important strategic locations, connecting Europe, Asia and the Middle East. These resources have made Kurdistan economically valuable while leaving its political future dependent upon the competing interests of more powerful states.

The Kurdish question has therefore become more than a struggle for national identity. It has become part of a wider competition over energy, security and regional influence. Governments that speak in favour of democracy often hesitate when democratic principles appear to conflict with economic or strategic interests. As a result, Kurdish rights have repeatedly been postponed in favour of political stability, military alliances or commercial partnerships.

This contradiction has shaped international relations for decades. The same governments that criticise human-rights violations in some countries may remain silent when similar abuses are committed by important allies. The result is a growing belief that international law is applied inconsistently, depending on the political and economic importance of the states involved.

Economic inequality also affects societies within the region. In many countries, wealth and political influence remain concentrated among a small number of individuals, powerful families and ruling elites. Corruption weakens public institutions, reduces trust in government and limits opportunities for ordinary citizens. Instead of national wealth benefiting the wider population, valuable natural resources often enrich those already in power.

Corruption is not simply a financial crime. It undermines democracy, weakens the rule of law and allows political leaders to remain in power through patronage rather than public service. Public money that could improve education, healthcare and infrastructure is diverted into private interests, while ordinary citizens bear the economic burden.

The Kurdish people have experienced these consequences directly. In different parts of Kurdistan, economic development has frequently been shaped by political priorities rather than the needs of local communities. Investment has often been directed towards strengthening state control instead of improving the lives of Kurdish citizens. In some areas, conflict has discouraged development altogether, leaving generations trapped between poverty and political instability.

The global trade in energy and military equipment has further complicated the Kurdish question. Many governments maintain close political and economic relations with states accused of violating Kurdish rights because those relationships support wider strategic objectives. Arms sales, energy agreements and commercial investment frequently continue despite concerns about democracy or human rights. Once again, political interests often outweigh moral principles.

This does not mean that international cooperation is wrong. Trade and investment are essential for global prosperity. The problem arises when economic interests become more important than justice. A stable international order cannot be built upon selective principles. If democracy, transparency and human rights are universal values, they must be defended consistently rather than only when politically convenient.

Transparency is therefore essential. Independent journalism, anti-corruption agencies, financial accountability and a free civil society all play an important role in exposing corruption and preventing the abuse of public resources. Across the world, courageous journalists, investigators and activists continue to reveal hidden wealth, tax avoidance, corruption and the misuse of public funds despite enormous personal risk.

Their work demonstrates that meaningful change rarely begins with governments alone. It often begins with ordinary citizens demanding accountability from those who hold political and economic power. A healthy society depends upon institutions that are stronger than individual leaders and laws that apply equally to the powerful and the powerless.

A future Kurdistan must learn from these lessons. Independence alone will not guarantee prosperity. A successful Kurdish state must be built upon transparent institutions, an independent judiciary, responsible management of natural resources and equal opportunities for all citizens. Oil and gas should become a foundation for national development rather than a source of corruption or political division.

Economic success should also benefit the entire region. A peaceful Kurdistan could become an important centre for trade, energy transport and regional cooperation. Shared prosperity creates stronger foundations for peace than endless military confrontation. When neighbouring countries benefit from cooperation, the incentives for conflict become far smaller.

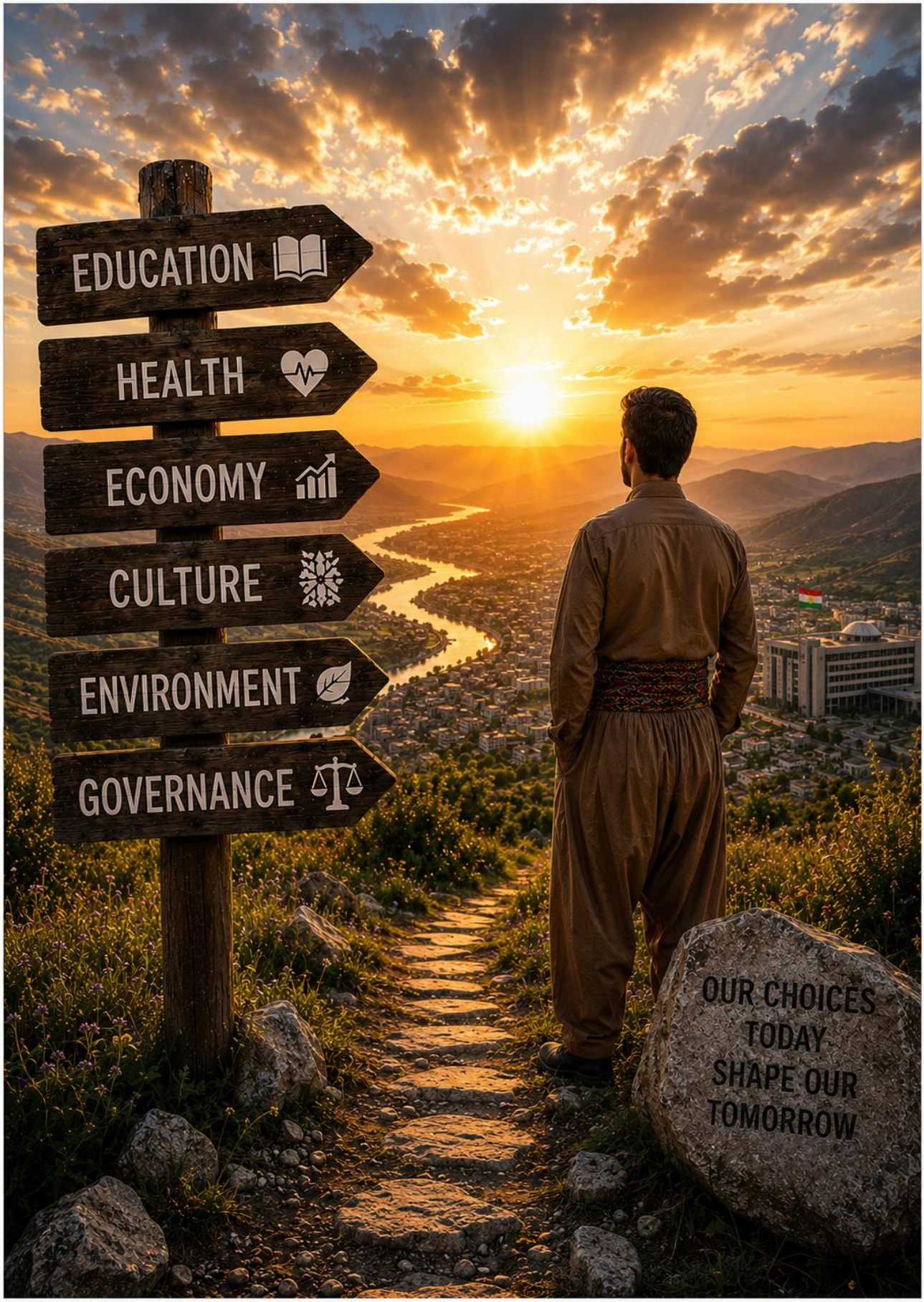
The Kurdish question should therefore not be viewed only through the lens of history or politics. It is also an economic question. A peaceful, democratic and economically

stable Kurdistan could contribute to regional growth, strengthen international trade and provide greater security for both its neighbours and its international partners.

Ultimately, every nation must decide whether wealth will be used to divide societies or improve them. The same choice faces Kurdistan. Its future should not be measured by the size of its oil reserves or the value of its natural resources, but by the strength of its institutions, the fairness of its laws and the opportunities available to every citizen.

The story of Kurdistan has too often been written in the shadows of war, political rivalry and economic competition. The challenge for the future is to bring that story into the sunlight, where justice, transparency and cooperation become stronger than corruption, oppression and narrow political interests.

Only then can Kurdistan fulfil not only its national aspirations but also its potential to become a stable, prosperous and responsible partner in an increasingly interconnected world.


EDUCATION
HEALTH
ECONOMY
CULTURE
ENVIRONMENT
GOVERNANCE
OUR CHOICES TODAY SHAPE OUR TOMORROW

Chapter Nine

The Price of Delay: Why the Kurdish Question Can No Longer Be Ignored

“Peace is not threatened because people demand freedom. Peace is threatened when justice is denied for too long.”

For more than one hundred years, the Kurdish question has remained one of the Middle East’s longest-running unresolved political issues. Governments have changed, wars have come and gone, and international alliances have shifted, yet millions of Kurds continue to live divided between different states without the opportunity to determine their own political future. The greatest danger is not that the Kurdish question exists. The greatest danger is allowing it to remain unresolved.

Throughout this book, one pattern has appeared repeatedly. Successive governments in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria have adopted different political systems and different ideologies, yet they have shared one common objective: preventing the emergence of an internationally recognised Kurdish nation. Military campaigns, political repression, demographic change and restrictions on Kurdish identity have differed in form but often pursued the same goal.

Turkey occupies a particularly important position because of its military strength, economic influence and strategic relationship with Europe, NATO and the United States. Under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, power has become increasingly centralised, while political Islam and Turkish nationalism have become more closely connected. Many democratic institutions have weakened, opposition voices have faced increasing pressure, and Kurdish political movements have continued to experience arrests, military operations and restrictions on political participation.

These developments matter far beyond Turkey's borders. Military interventions in Syria and Iraq, tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, close relations with Azerbaijan and growing regional influence demonstrate that Turkish policy increasingly shapes the

political future of the wider Middle East. Decisions made in Ankara affect not only Turkish citizens but also millions of people across the region, particularly Kurdish communities living beyond Turkey's borders.

The human cost of delaying a lasting solution continues to grow. Every generation of conflict produces new refugees, new political prisoners, new economic hardship and new communities living in fear. Children inherit wars they did not begin, while families remain divided by borders created long before they were born. Entire generations have grown up knowing conflict as a normal part of life.

The consequences are not limited to Kurdistan. Regional instability encourages extremism, weakens economic development, increases forced migration and creates repeated humanitarian crises. When conflicts remain unresolved, neighbouring countries and the wider international community eventually bear the consequences through refugee movements, security challenges and rising political tensions.

The international community has often responded with caution rather than leadership. Strategic alliances, military cooperation, migration agreements and economic interests have frequently outweighed concerns about human rights and democratic principles. Governments that speak passionately about international law have often applied those principles selectively when powerful allies are involved.

This inconsistency weakens confidence in the international system itself. Democracy, justice and human rights cannot remain credible if they are defended only when politically convenient. The same principles that protect one nation should also protect another, regardless of its size, military strength or strategic importance.

The solution does not lie in confrontation alone. Lasting peace requires dialogue, diplomacy and political courage from all sides. The Kurdish question cannot be solved through military force, just as it cannot be ignored indefinitely. Every attempt to suppress Kurdish identity has postponed the problem rather than resolving it.

A peaceful settlement requires all parties to recognise an essential reality: the Kurdish people are a nation with their own language, history, culture and homeland.

Recognition does not automatically determine the political outcome, but it creates the foundation upon which meaningful negotiations can begin. Whether the future involves greater autonomy, federal arrangements or full independence should ultimately be decided through peaceful, democratic and internationally recognised processes rather than violence.

The United Nations, the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and other international partners all have an important responsibility. Their role should not be to impose solutions but to encourage negotiations, protect human rights and ensure that democratic principles are applied consistently. Peace cannot be built through selective justice.

A democratic and peaceful Kurdistan should not be viewed as a threat to the region. On the contrary, it has the potential to become a source of stability, economic cooperation and regional partnership. A people who have experienced generations of conflict understand the value of peace more than most. The future should therefore be built upon cooperation with neighbouring nations rather than permanent hostility towards them.

This book has argued that the Kurdish question is not simply a Kurdish issue. It is a test of whether the international community truly believes in the values it claims to defend. If democracy, equality and self-determination are universal principles, then they cannot exclude one of the world's largest stateless nations.

The future of Kurdistan should never be shaped by fear, revenge or hatred. It should be guided by justice, international law and respect for the dignity of all peoples. Turks, Arabs, Persians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Kurds all deserve to live in peace and security. The recognition of Kurdish rights does not require the denial of anyone else's rights. Justice is not a limited resource that must be taken from one nation to be given to another.

History will not judge the world only by the wars it fought. It will also judge the conflicts it chose not to resolve. For more than a century, the Kurdish question has remained

unfinished. The cost of delay has been measured in lost lives, divided families, destroyed communities and opportunities for peace that were allowed to pass.

The choice now belongs not only to the Kurdish people but also to the international community. It can continue to manage the consequences of an unresolved conflict, or it can help create the conditions for a peaceful and lasting settlement based on justice, democracy and the equal rights of all nations.

After more than a century of conflict, repression and postponed opportunities, the Kurdish question can no longer be treated as a temporary problem to be managed. The price of delay is already visible in lost lives, displaced families, weakened societies and repeated regional instability. The question facing the international community is no longer whether the Kurdish issue deserves attention, but whether governments and institutions possess the political courage to help pursue a peaceful and just settlement. The following chapter therefore turns from the consequences of inaction to the responsibilities of those who still have the power to help shape a different future.

Chapter Ten

A Call to the World: Justice for the Kurdish People

“History remembers not only those who committed injustice, but also those who had the power to prevent it and chose silence instead.”

This book began by asking a simple question: why does the Kurdish question remain one of the world's longest unresolved national struggles? After examining history, politics, economics and international relations, one conclusion becomes increasingly difficult to ignore. The Kurdish people have not simply struggled against neighbouring states. They have also struggled against the inconsistency of the international community.

For more than a century, millions of Kurds have sought recognition of their identity, protection of their language and the right to determine their own political future. Throughout that time, international organisations have repeatedly spoken in support of democracy, human rights and the principle of self-determination. Yet those principles have rarely been applied consistently to the Kurdish nation.

This chapter is not written to assign blame alone. It is written as an appeal to those who possess the influence to help shape a more just future. Governments, international organisations, human-rights institutions and civil society all have an opportunity to help resolve one of the oldest unresolved questions in modern international politics.

The United Nations was created to promote peace, protect human rights and encourage cooperation between nations. Its Charter recognises the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Many Kurds therefore ask a reasonable question: if these principles are universal, why has the Kurdish question remained unresolved for so long? The role of the United Nations should not be to decide Kurdistan's future but to ensure that any future is determined peacefully, democratically and in accordance with international law.

The European Union has consistently presented itself as a defender of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. These values have shaped its relations with countries across the world. The Kurdish people therefore look to Europe not simply as an economic partner but as a community founded upon principles that should be applied consistently, regardless of political convenience.

The United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and other democratic nations have often worked closely with Kurdish forces during times of conflict. Kurdish men and women fought alongside international coalitions against ISIS and paid an enormous human price in defence of shared security. Many Kurds therefore believe that this partnership should extend beyond military cooperation and include sustained support for democratic rights, peaceful dialogue and a lasting political solution.

International organisations dedicated to protecting human rights also have an important responsibility. Institutions that defend freedom of expression, minority rights and the rule of law should continue documenting abuses wherever they occur, regardless of the government responsible. Consistency strengthens credibility, while selective attention weakens public confidence in international justice.

The welfare of Kurdish children deserves particular attention. Decades of conflict have left many children displaced, traumatised and deprived of education, healthcare and security. Organisations working to protect children's rights have made valuable contributions in many Kurdish communities, yet the scale of humanitarian need remains immense. Every child, regardless of nationality or ethnicity, deserves the opportunity to grow up in peace, free from war and displacement.

The Nobel Peace Prize has long recognised individuals and organisations that have advanced peace, justice and reconciliation. Whether through the Nobel Committee or other international institutions, greater recognition of those who have worked peacefully for dialogue, reconciliation and the protection of Kurdish rights would help bring wider international attention to one of the world's longest unresolved national questions.

This book does not argue that one nation deserves rights denied to another. On the contrary, it argues that the same principles should apply equally to everyone. Justice loses its meaning when it is selective. Democracy loses its credibility when it is defended in some places but overlooked in others. Human rights cease to be universal when they depend upon military alliances or economic interests.

The future of Kurdistan should never be determined through violence, revenge or hatred. Lasting peace requires dialogue between Kurds and their neighbours, supported by international institutions committed to fairness and impartiality. Recognition of Kurdish rights does not threaten regional peace. It offers an opportunity to resolve one of the region's most enduring sources of conflict through negotiation rather than force.

A future Kurdish state, should it emerge through peaceful and democratic means, must itself become an example of the values it seeks from others. It must protect freedom of expression, uphold the rule of law, guarantee equal rights for all communities and reject corruption, discrimination and political repression. Justice cannot be demanded abroad while being neglected at home.

The responsibility therefore belongs to everyone. Kurdish leaders must govern with integrity. Neighbouring states must recognise that lasting stability cannot be achieved through military force alone. Democratic nations must apply their principles consistently. International organisations must continue defending human rights without fear or favour. Civil society, journalists, academics and ordinary citizens must continue speaking for those whose voices have too often gone unheard.

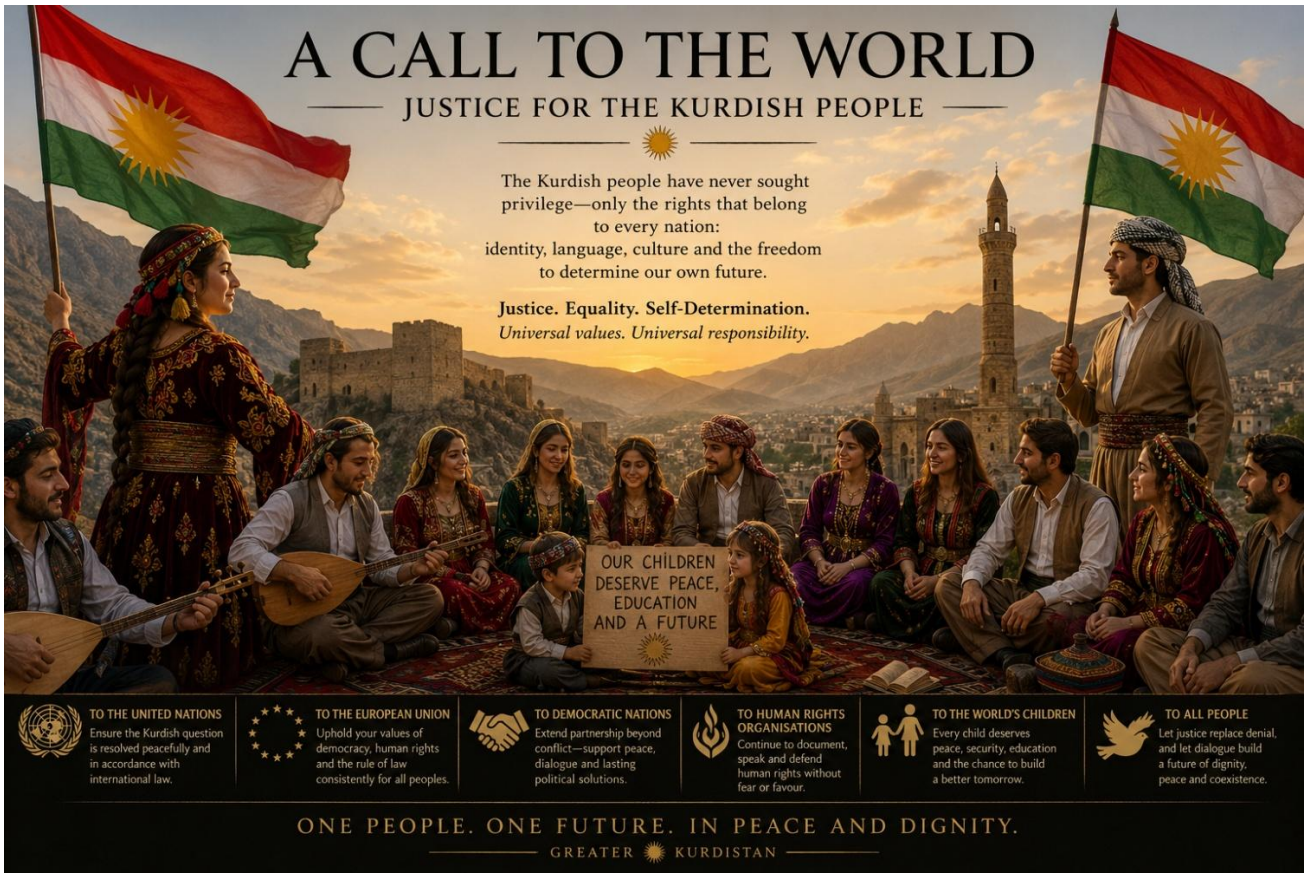
The Kurdish question has never been simply about borders. It is about whether a nation can preserve its identity, language, culture and dignity while living in peace with its neighbours. It is about whether international law applies equally to all peoples or only to those whose interests align with the world's most powerful states.

History has shown that injustice postponed is rarely injustice resolved. Every generation that inherits an unresolved conflict pays a price for the failures of the

generation before it. The Kurdish people have carried that burden for more than a century. The next generation deserves something different.

This book therefore ends not with anger but with hope. Hope that dialogue will replace violence. Hope that justice will replace denial. Hope that democracy will be measured not by words but by actions. Above all, hope that one day the Kurdish people, like every other nation, will be able to determine their future peacefully, freely and with dignity.

The story of Greater Kurdistan is still being written. Whether its next chapter is shaped by conflict or by reconciliation depends not only on the Kurdish people but also on the courage of the international community to uphold the principles it has long proclaimed. If justice, equality and self-determination truly are universal values, then the time has come to ensure that they are universal in practice as well as in principle.


A CALL TO THE WORLD
JUSTICE FOR THE KURDISH PEOPLE
The Kurdish people have never sought privilege—only the rights that belong to every nation:
identity, language, culture and the freedom to determine our own future.
Justice. Equality. Self-Determination.
Universal values. Universal responsibility.
OUR CHILDREN DESERVE PEACE, EDUCATION AND A FUTURE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
Ensure the Kurdish question is resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law.
TO THE EUROPEAN UNION
Uphold your values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law consistently for all peoples.
TO DEMOCRATIC NATIONS
Extend partnership beyond conflict—support peace, dialogue and lasting political solutions.
TO HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS
Continue to document, speak and defend human rights without fear or favour.
TO THE WORLD'S CHILDREN
Every child deserves peace, security, education and the chance to build a better tomorrow.
TO ALL PEOPLE
Let justice replace denial, and let dialogue build a future of dignity, peace and coexistence.
ONE PEOPLE. ONE FUTURE. IN PEACE AND DIGNITY.
GREATER KURDISTAN

Conclusion

Shaping a Future of Justice and Peace

“The true measure of history is not how long injustice survives, but whether humanity finds the courage to overcome it.”

Every generation inherits unresolved questions from the past. Some are settled through dialogue, some through compromise, and others remain open because the political will to resolve them never fully emerges. The Kurdish question is one of those unfinished chapters of modern history.

This book has explored the historical, political and economic forces that have shaped the Kurdish struggle for recognition and self-determination. It has examined the division of Kurdistan, the consequences of regional policies, the influence of international powers and the continuing search for a peaceful and lasting solution. Throughout these chapters, one theme has remained constant: lasting peace cannot be built upon the denial of a people's identity.

The Kurdish people have endured generations of conflict, displacement and political uncertainty. Yet they have also preserved their language, culture and national identity despite enormous challenges. Their resilience demonstrates that while borders may divide territory, they cannot erase the identity of a nation.

At the same time, this book has argued that the Kurdish question should not be viewed only as a Kurdish issue. It is also a question about the consistency of international principles. If democracy, human rights and the right of peoples to determine their own future are truly universal values, then they should be applied consistently, regardless of geography, political alliances or economic interests.

No lasting solution can be achieved through military force alone. History has repeatedly shown that repression may postpone political problems, but it rarely resolves them. Sustainable peace requires dialogue, mutual recognition, respect for international law and a willingness to address legitimate grievances through democratic means.

The vision presented throughout this book is not one of perpetual conflict. It is one of peaceful coexistence. A future Kurdistan, should it emerge through peaceful and democratic processes, should seek friendship with its neighbours rather than hostility. Justice for the Kurdish people should never require injustice towards others. Peace built upon mutual respect offers greater security for every nation than peace maintained through fear.

That future also depends upon the Kurdish people themselves. National unity, democratic institutions, transparent government, respect for diversity and the rule of law must become the foundations of any future Kurdish state. Independence is not an end in itself; it is an opportunity to build a society that reflects the values of justice, equality and accountability.

The international community likewise carries an important responsibility. Governments and international organisations should continue supporting dialogue, protecting human rights and encouraging peaceful solutions to long-standing conflicts. Their role is not to impose political outcomes but to ensure that disputes are addressed fairly, peacefully and in accordance with international law.

This book also recognises the countless Kurdish men and women who have devoted their lives to preserving their language, culture and national identity. Some worked through political movements, others through education, literature, journalism, humanitarian work or peaceful advocacy. Many sacrificed their freedom, and some gave their lives. Their contribution reminds us that national identity is sustained not only through political leadership but through the determination of ordinary people.

The Kurdish story is ultimately a human story. It is about families separated by borders, children growing up in conflict, communities preserving their culture under difficult circumstances and generations refusing to abandon hope. It is also a story shared by many peoples throughout history who have sought recognition, dignity and the opportunity to shape their own future.

The purpose of this book has never been to encourage hatred or division. Its purpose has been to encourage discussion, reflection and a peaceful search for justice. Every lasting peace begins with the recognition that the dignity of one people does not diminish the dignity of another. On the contrary, respect for the rights of one nation strengthens respect for the rights of all nations.

Whether the future brings greater autonomy, federal arrangements or an independent Kurdistan will ultimately depend upon peaceful political processes and the choices of those most directly affected. Whatever path is taken, it should be guided by dialogue rather than violence, cooperation rather than confrontation and hope rather than fear.

History remains unfinished. The decisions made by today's leaders, institutions and citizens will shape the lives of future generations. They will determine whether the Kurdish question continues to be a source of conflict or becomes an example of how long-standing disputes can be resolved through justice, courage and peaceful negotiation.

The dream of Greater Kurdistan is, above all, a dream of dignity. It is the hope that every nation, regardless of its size or power, should have the opportunity to preserve its identity, protect its culture and participate freely in shaping its own future. Whether one agrees with every argument presented in this book or not, the Kurdish question deserves thoughtful engagement rather than silence, and dialogue rather than dismissal.

If this book encourages readers to reflect more deeply on justice, democracy, human rights and the importance of peaceful coexistence, then it has achieved its purpose.

The future of Kurdistan has not yet been written. Like all great chapters of history, its final pages will depend not only on political leaders but on the courage of ordinary people, the wisdom of diplomacy and the willingness of nations to place justice alongside their interests.

May that future be shaped not by fear, but by hope; not by oppression, but by freedom; and not by endless conflict, but by lasting peace.

CONCLUSION
SHAPING A FUTURE
OF JUSTICE AND PEACE
"The true measure of history is not how long injustice survives, but whether humanity finds the courage to overcome it."
The Kurdish people have endured, resisted and remained. Now, together, let us build a future based on justice, dialogue, dignity and peaceful coexistence.
DIGNITY
not humiliation
DIALOGUE
not violence
JUSTICE
not denial
FREEDOM
not oppression
PEACE
not endless conflict
UNIVERSITY OF KURDISTAN
KURDISTAN PARLIAMENT
OUR FUTURE
OUR CHOICE
OUR PEACE
PEOPLE AND IDENTITY
A nation's identity cannot be erased. It can only be respected.
DIALOGUE AND RESPECT
Lasting peace is built through dialogue, mutual respect and understanding.
JUSTICE AND RIGHTS
Universal principles must be applied consistently for all.
EDUCATION AND CULTURE
Language, culture and heritage are the roots of a resilient nation.
PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE
A future of friendship with neighbours is stronger than enmity and war.
UNITY AND DEMOCRACY
Democratic values, unity and the rule of law are the foundation of the future.
INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
The world must support peaceful solutions and protect human rights.
THE FUTURE OF KURDISTAN WILL BE WRITTEN WITH COURAGE, WISDOM AND HOPE.
ONE PEOPLE. ONE LAND. ONE FUTURE IN PEACE.
May that future be shaped not by fear, but by hope; not by oppression, but by freedom; and not by endless conflict, but by lasting peace.

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